The Sugar in the Milk and the Augmented Historian

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at

The Australian National University

The contents of this thesis reflect my own, original work, except where otherwise indicated in the text.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by thanking my supervisor Paul Pickering and his writing group at the Australian National University for their critical but always constructive feedback. Assa Doron, another panel member, has provided critical feedback on the thesis and introduced me to some key ideas. This has been a long PhD and I would particularly like to thank Paul and Assa for sticking with me. Robert Hassan provided helpful feedback on several chapters and Dipesh Chakrabarty helped formulate the project. Both were also on my panel. During fieldwork I was supervised by Shalini Bharat at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences who provided a number of helpful introductions.

I would also like to thank my previous supervisors Debjani Ganguly, Irfan Ahmad, and Ian Copeland. Rashmi Desai also offered some very helpful suggestions. Also at the ANU I would like to thank McComas Taylor, Kirin Narayan, Glenn Roe, Robert Cribb, Carolyn Strange, Alistair MacLachlan, and Meera Ashar for some helpful discussions along with my fellow students Patrick McCartney, Mark Jones, and Rosalind Hewett. From the University of Melbourne I would like to thank Mike Arnold.

This project would have been enormously difficult without the scholarship provided by the ANU and a Prime Minister's Australia Asia Outgoing Postgraduate Award.

I would particularly like to thank my invisible supervisor Jennifer Windt for her critical feedback on my argument, close reading, help with conceptual coherence, the linking of my argument to cyborg studies, and the countless discussions to help clarify exactly what I was doing. I would also like to thank Sue Buck for proofreading the thesis.

Fieldwork in India allowed me to unpack the Parsi story and have countless enlightening conversations with scholars about history. In no particular order I would like to thank Ashgar Ali Engineer for his critical reading of the Parsi story, Sadan Jha and Kiran Desai at the South Gujarat University for discussions about history and Gujarat, Makrand Mehta for our discussion of Gujarati history, Najaf Haidar at Jawaharlal Nehru University for Mughal history, and Meera Kosambi for our discussions about colonial history. I would also like to thank Daniel Sheffield and Ruzbeh Abas for leads and conversations about the Parsis and Zoroastrianism.

Central to the thesis are the Parsis and their supporters who have provided their time and resources. I would like to begin by thanking Shernaz Cama and those involved with the Parzor project, Armaity Desai, Kersi Shroff, Moe Chiba from UNESCO, Nasha

Mehta, Rukshana Shroff, and Vanshika Singh. While in Gujarat I stayed at the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library in Navsari and was generously supported by the chief librarian Bharti Gandhi in both traversing the archive and living in Navsari. Also in Navsari I would like to thank my Gujarati teacher and supporter Piyush Bhatt and his son Hamael along with Pearl Firoz Mehta for their help with Gujarati texts. There I also had a number of helpful conversations with Dara Jokhi and many other Parsis such as Yazdi Karanjia, Rumi Bharaia, and Arnavaz Chubb. In Mumbai, I received advice, support, and had wonderful conversations with many Parsis. I would particularly like to thank Rusheed Wadia for our discussion of Parsi history. Nawaz Mody and the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute provided advice, insight, and access to their archives. Khojeste and Firoze Mistree provided a number of introductions and insights into Parsi life and history. I have had a number of illuminating conversations with Parsi priests Royinton Peer, Ramiyar Karanjia, Dastur Firzoe Kotwal, and Dastur Mirza. Discussion and advice was also provided by Marzban Giara, Noshir Dadrawala, Viloo Morawala-Patell, and Rukshana Nanji. From my honours project on Parsi history I received ongoing advice and help with translations by Aban Mukherji. I also would like to thank Aadil Desai and his partner Piya Bose and Mumbai. Finally, I would like to thank the Parsi whose name I cannot recall whom I met on the beach at Dandi in Gujarat in 2007. He told me the Sugar in the Milk story which started this project.

Abstract

In a seaside village in India I met a Parsi who told me the story of the Sugar in the Milk. The story began with his religion of Zoroastrianism and the grandeur of their ancient Iranian empires. Then tragedy struck as his ancestors were defeated and persecuted by Muslims, prompting their escape by boat to India. They arrived not far along the beach from where we were standing, at a port called Sanjan, and sought refuge from the local Hindu king. Fearful of these strangers the king presented a Zoroastrian priest with a bowl of milk to signify that the land was full. The priest replied by stirring sugar into the milk, explaining that they would mix in and sweeten society without causing the bowl to overflow. The king accepted them and allowed the building of a Zoroastrian fire temple. To this day, the fire is maintained by Parsi priests not far from where they first landed. It is called the Iranshah, or the King of Iran.

This story is one amongst a number of historical revisions of the Parsi origin story produced using a variety of media over more than four hundred years. I argue that these revisions express different forms of historical consciousness, or different ways of knowing the past and representing it in narrative form. I examine four exemplary revisions, beginning with the oldest manuscript version from 1599, through to two print histories published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and finally a web-based revision produced in 2014. I use these revisions as a case study to understand how history is revised and new forms of historical consciousness are produced.

I propose an interdisciplinary theory of historiographical agency that draws upon insights from history, anthropology, literary studies, media studies, science and technology studies, and the philosophy of mind. I argue that we must decentre the individual historian from the production of history and instead focus on the space between the historian and shifts in power relations, historical conventions, and media. In this space we find a historian who is augmented by relationships of power, different methods of knowing the past, and the varying capabilities of sources and narrative media to transmit what happened in the past through time to the future. All historians are augmented historians, but how they are augmented differs. In this thesis I examine a series of hybrid agents and the histories they produced, ranging from the oral-history-human to the script-history-human, the print-history-human, the column-history-human, and the web-history-human.

Using the revisions, I then reflect upon shifts in historical consciousness between three different epochs: the Mughal, the modern, and the global. I attribute the varying

forms of historical consciousness in these epochs to differently augmented historians. I conclude that key aspects of the historical thinking of the oral-history-human and the script-history-human are being restored by the web-history-human. The era of the print-history-human appears as a mere interlude, which is now coming to an end and being replaced by the augmented orality of the cyborg.

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1. The Augmented Historian: an overview of the main claims of this thesis

In a seaside village in India I met a Parsi who told me the story of his community. He began with their religion of Zoroastrianism and the grandeur of their ancient empires in Iran. The defeat of their last empire by Muslims and the persecution that followed forced his ancestors to leave their homeland and escape to India by boat. They arrived at a village named Sanjan, not far from where we were standing, and sought refuge from a Hindu king. But the king was fearful of these strangers and presented them with a bowl of milk to symbolise that the land was full and there was no space for them. In reply one of the Parsi priests stirred sugar into the milk to symbolise that they would blend in and sweeten the society. Just as the sugar did not cause the milk to overflow, so too the Parsis would not create territorial or political problems. The king was convinced and gave the Parsis land on which to build a fire temple; it was named the Iranshah, or the King of Iran. To this day, the fire is maintained by Parsi priests in a village not far from where I was told this story and close to where they first landed.

This story is known as the Sugar in the Milk and it has become the dominant revision amongst a number of accounts explaining how Iranians came to be the Zoroastrians of India. All of these accounts narrate, with some modifications, the same broad story. They begin with Zoroastrian empires in Iran whose final defeat at the hands of Muslims leads to persecution and departure to India. They then narrate an encounter with a Hindu king followed by a fusion of Hindu and Zoroastrian practices. The details and allegory of each revision are different. For instance, the metaphorical blending of the sugar in the milk features in only the most recent version and is absent in earlier revisions. Yet despite their differences, all of these revisions narrate a representation of the world that the authors hold to be true, are considered historical by their contemporaries, and describe events and people whose existence can largely be corroborated.

I use four revisions of the Parsi story produced over a 415-year period to reflect upon how history is produced and shifts in historical thinking. This thesis is a history of history-telling, or what is sometimes called a history of ideas, an intellectual history, or simply historiography, the study of historical thinking. I am not concerned with the fate of Zoroastrianism in Iran or whether there was in fact a king with a bowl of milk and a priest who stirred in sugar. Rather, I use Parsi histories as a case-study to understand how we think about the past and how this thinking has changed over time.

To this end, I have chosen four revisions that are exemplary for their times. I begin with the oldest extant written revision, a manuscript composed in 1599 known as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, or the Story of Sanjan. It is a Persian language poem that narrates a history of Zoroastrian kings from Iran to India, persecution at the hands of Muslims, and an alliance with Hindus trading refuge for acculturation and loyalty. Although it is the oldest extant revision, this poem is not the origin of Parsi history-telling. The author was revising an oral story that had been retold by generations of priests.[1] I then examine the first print revision of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* titled *The Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs, and Religion.*[2] It was published in 1858 and differs from the poem in medium, form, and content. It is the first ethnic history of the Parsis as a people. Composition of the third began in 1911 and it was published posthumously in 1954; it is titled *The Early History of the Parsees in India.*[3] The authors seek to resolve disputes concerning the historical accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and whether their ancestors were in fact persecuted in Iran. The final revision, titled *Parsi Zoroastrians: From Persia to Akbar's Court — Weaving a Story of Culture, Continuity and Change*, first published on the World Wide Web in 2014 using tools from Google. It is a hypermediated history that revises the earlier versions and is the first to include the oral Sugar in the Milk story.[4]

1.1 Why read this thesis?

Although the Parsis are a small and seemingly obscure community, their history and how they tell their story is a helpful guide for reflecting on migration, refugees, perceptions of India, and globalisation. I find it illuminating how Parsis have used history to negotiate relationships in which they acculturate the traditions of others yet continue their own. The Parsi experience is instructive for a world grappling with migration because there are historical practices that are integral to India's enormous linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. Yet the scholarship and general perception of India largely focuses on

1 The Qesse-ye Sanjan translates to the Story of Sanjan. According to the story the Parsis first landed in a village called Sanjan on the Gujarati coast. The Qesse-ye Sanjan is a Persian poem and I will be using the English translation by Williams. The versions and the provenance of the Qesse-ye Sanjanare discussed in chapter four. Alan Williams, The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

2 Today the name of the community is transliterated from Gujarati as Parsi however in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was often as Parsee. Dosabhai Framji Karaka, *The Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs, and Religion* (London, Smith, Elder and co.; Bombay, Smith, Taylor and co., 1858).

3 Rustom Burjorji Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India* (Bombay: Zartoshti Dharam Sambandhi Kelavni Apnari Ane Dnyan Felavnari Mandli, 1954).

4 Shernaz Cama and Vanshika Singh, "Parsi Zoroastrians: From Persia to Akbar's Court - Weaving a Story of Culture, Continuity and Change," Google Arts & Culture, accessed December 4, 2015, https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/parsi-zoroastrians-from-persia-to-akbar-s-court/gQXXqzxD?hl=en-GB.

the horrors such as Hindu-Muslim conflict, poverty and resistance, caste violence, and gender discrimination. The Parsi experience provides an insightful contrast because they are wealthy, impeccably modern, and it is in India that a three millennia long Zoroastrian tradition has survived, which has largely been eclipsed in Iran. Because the Parsis have played an integral role in the four century long development of global trade and ways of thinking about the world that have come to define modernity, we can use a micro-history of Parsi story-telling to see one way in which the contemporary world has come to be.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand how history is revised and new forms of historical consciousness produced. I make four key original contributions to knowledge and suggest the outlines of a new theory of historiography. The first contribution is a historiographical study of how the Parsi origin story was revised in three different eras: Mughal, British colonial, and global. These revisions form the empirical elements of the thesis. The second contribution is a method to compare these revisions and the varying forms of historical consciousness. Based on this analysis, I propose that aspects of precolonial oral historical thinking are being restored in the era of the global web. I term this restoration augmented orality and it is my third contribution. The fourth contribution is a theory of historiographical agency in which I propose a decentring of human actors from the production of history. Instead, I focus on the augmented historian who exists in the space between the author, shifts in power relations, the development of new historical conventions, and new media for both historical narratives and their sources.

1.2 Historical consciousness and the importance of historiography

Given that this is a thesis about historical consciousness we must first define the term. Historical consciousness encompasses the dual meaning of history as both the past and its representation in narrative form; it is a consciousness of what happened but also a consciousness of a method to know the past and conventions for its representation. For Parsis, historical consciousness is an understanding of the displacement that made them the Zoroastrians of India, and also an awareness of how they know the story of their ancestors. Historical consciousness is not limited to written history, one part of the world or a particular era. It encompasses a variety of cultural practices that engage with the past, ranging from oral stories, monuments, museums, galleries, documentaries, biographies, paintings, films, novels, dances, songs, plays, and websites.[5] Historical consciousness comes

5 What constitutes historical consciousness is a matter of debate that will be discussed in chapter three. See Jörn Rüsen, "Historical Consciousness: Narrative Structure, Moral Function, and Ontogenetic

in different forms depending upon the civilisation, era, and people. These different forms are manifestations of distinct historiographical traditions in which each has its own conventions to distinguish whether a story is considered by its contemporaries as historical or as another genre of literature or storytelling.[6] Critically though, not all cultural practices relating to the past express a form of historical consciousness. What distinguishes historical consciousness is an awareness of a method to acquire the raw material of what happened and conventions for its narration that contemporaries consider historical.

Historiography is important because there is often a lack of reflexivity about the implicit assumptions that inform histories, utterances of a historical nature, and the determination of which works are considered historical. There has been an often parochial privileging of a historical method that seeks to know the past contextually through corroborating sources and represent it for a contemporary audience. Yet the past can be known through an oral tradition that has passed a story of what happened from one generation to the next.

Broadly, in the second half of the twentieth century there was a reaction against history and the claim that the past can be known through a method developed in Europe. Universalising claims about historical thinking were rejected in favour of studies that focused on one tradition in isolation. However, this has brought its own set of problems because without comparison we run the danger of reading one tradition without considering its similarities to other contemporary traditions and understanding what existed before.[7] Indeed, there is a danger of romanticising one tradition or denigrating

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Development," in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (University of Toronto Press, 2004); Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," *History and Memory* 1, no. 1 (April 1, 1989): 5–26; Hans-Georg Gadamer and Hans Fantel, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 5, no. 1 (1975): 8–52; Peter Seixas, "Introduction," in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (University of Toronto Press, 2004), 3–20.

6 I will elaborate upon these traditions in the third chapter. For now it is helpful to simply cite Georg G Iggers, Q. Edward Wang, and Supriya Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (Harlow, England; New York: Pearson Longman, 2008); R. G Collingwood and W. J. van der Dussen, *The Idea of History: With Lectures 1926-1928* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Jörn Rüsen, ed., *Time and History: The Variety of Cultures* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007); C. P Melville and Ehsan Yarshater, *Persian Historiography* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2012); Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Q. Edward Wang and Georg G Iggers, *Turning Points in Historiography: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002); Asim Roy, "Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings: India 1350-1750," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Vol. 3, Vol. 3,* ed. José Rabasa et al., 2012, 148–73.

7 Sheldon Pollock, "New Intellectuals in Seventeenth-Century India," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 38, no. 1 (2001): 3–31.

historical thinking.[8] Simply put, we cannot understand what is similar and unique without comparison.

Importantly, alongside differences between historiographical traditions there are common assumptions about the structure of historical change. These include the idea of linear stages of historical development such as ancient, feudal, and modern, or alternatively the idea that history is cyclical. Both ways of thinking about history suggest we can divine the future from the past. In the case of linear stages it is because we develop a theory of historical change and transpose this to the future; in the case of a cyclical sensibility, there is the maxim that history repeats itself, which leads to the assumption that in the past we can see our future. It is often suggested that there are historical lessons to be learnt, as illustrated in the oft quoted aphorism: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."[9] Even more broadly, how we think about history is intimately tied to how we locate ourselves in time and how we conceptualise not only the past, but also the present and the future. An understanding of historical stages is foundational to imagining future stages for both utopians and dystopians.

These assumptions and ways of historical thinking are not necessarily problematic. What is problematic is the lack of awareness concerning the political implications of different sensibilities. Historical thinking can be quite conservative when a tradition is invoked as a bulwark against some contemporary change. A historical story is often central to the formation of groups such as nations, communities, ethnicities, religions, and political movements; here the commonality amongst disparate individuals is established by an almost familial-like ancestry. History establishes authenticity and identifies who can claim to be the rightful custodians of a tradition; in doing so it delineates the contours of who belongs and who does not. Power relations between individuals and groups of people can be constituted by claims that an event, person, people, or idea is historical, and also by types of historical thinking, manifested in words such as developed, modern, and advanced. I find it illuminating to examine how different forms of historical consciousness are intertwined with varying power relationships.

The importance of how we think about and compare forms of historical consciousness can be seen in the way history was used to justify European conquest of the

8 For instance see Ashis Nandy, "Time Travel to a Possible Self: Searching for the Alternative Cosmopolitanism of Cochin," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 02 (2000): 295–327; Ashis Nandy, "History's Forgotten Doubles," *History and Theory* 34, no. 2 (1995): 44–66; Vinay Lal, *The History of History: Politics and Scholarship in Modern India* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2005).

9 George Santayana, *The Life of Reason; or, The Phases of Human Progress* (London Constable, 1906), 284, http://archive.org/details/thelifeofreasono00santuoft.

non-European world. From the late eighteenth century in Europe, and in the following century in India, traditions were judged against European standards. There was a focus on a tradition's fidelity to the past, its emphasis on factuality, and a particular method of inquiry. History became an endeavour to understand the past contextually and on its own terms. Peoples were either classified as historical, meaning that they possessed a historical account and an awareness of this method, or they were considered ahistorical, or without history. In this way of thinking Western Europeans were historical and much of the rest of the world was considered ahistorical. At this time comparative historiography was part of a project to understand different peoples within a universal framework in which Europeans were more advanced because they were historically conscious. The problem with this approach is that it made colonial rule appear natural and munificent to both the colonisers and colonised.[10] It is important to reflect upon how colonialism appeared natural at the time so that we can reflect upon how different types of domination appear natural to us today.

1.3 Comparing forms of historical consciousness

In order to understand distinct forms of historical consciousness I advance a method to compare revisions of the same story produced in different traditions, eras, and media. This method is an interdisciplinary answer to a historiographical problem that draws upon theories from media studies, science and technology studies, and philosophy together with methods from history, anthropology, and literary studies. My method is an empirically informed response to a theoretical problem. I compare how different forms of historical consciousness are manifested in revisions of the same story. This involves a comparison of a latter revision with its antecedents so that each is understood as a production unique to its own time, place, and medium. To this end I have developed a framework in which I consistently compare the same narrative and historiographical categories. Using this framework I have then been able to compare historical consciousness in the Mughal, colonial and modern, postcolonial, and now global eras. One community's changing historical sensibility is then used as a window into different historiographical traditions.

When I compared the revisions using this method, I discovered a striking similarity between the historical consciousness expressed in the first script revision and the most

10 This will be discussed in detail in the second chapter. For instance, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. John Sibree (Kitchener: Batoche, 2001); James Mill, *The History of British India*, vol. 1 (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1826).

recent web revision.[11] The resemblance can be seen clearly when the revisions are abstracted into a formulation I have developed for depicting how different eras are represented and for whom. All the revisions are a representation of one era in another era for an audience in yet another era. While every work of history engages with the past, present, and future, there are different configurations. The similarities between the first and last revision can be seen clearly once they are categorised:

1. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, the manuscript from 1599, is a representation of the present in the past for the future.
2. *The Parsees*, the print revision from 1858, is a representation of the past from 1599 in the past for the present.
3. *The Early History*, the print revision from 1954, is a representation of the past in the past for the present.
4. *Parsi Zoroastrians*, the web revision from 2014, is a representation of the present in the past for the future.

In seeking to understand the similarities I found a helpful framework in a theory of restoration. Here scholars from media studies propose that electronic media are restoring modes of cognition that existed prior to print and in some cases prior to literacy.[12] In a sense, there is a symmetry in how we know the world on either side of the print era. In this approach, different ways of thinking about the world were tied to the medium. I could then see that there was more than a surface similarity between the web and script revisions: *Parsi Zoroastrians* was restoring the historical sensibility of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, which had been temporarily eclipsed by print history.

In the Gutenberg Parenthesis I discovered a metaphor that succinctly encapsulated the restoration and the legacies of print. The Gutenberg Parenthesis is a helpful formulation because it references the inventor of the printing press, Johannes Gutenberg, and the symbol of parenthesis, which represents a printed ordering of a sentence. This formulation helps us think through the shifts in thinking between eras and media. In order

11 In chapter three and throughout the thesis I will expand upon the similarities and differences between the revisions.

12 Thomas Pettitt, "Media Dynamics and the Lessons of History," in *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*, ed. John Hartley, Jean Burgess, and Axel Bruns (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 53–72; The Gutenberg Parenthesis Research Forum (Institute for Literature, Media and Cultural Studies, University of Southern Denmark), "Position Paper," Syddansk Universitet, accessed January 25, 2016, http://www.sdu.dk/en/Om_SDU/Institutter_centre/Ikv/Forskning/Forskningsprojekter/Gutenberg_projekt/PositionPaper; Walter J Ong and John Hartley, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012); Marsall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994); John Miles Foley, *Oral Tradition and the Internet Pathways of the Mind* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012).

to understand the metaphor, imagine reading a sentence in which there is a middle section bracketed by parenthesis. In the parenthesis the sentence departs from the main subject but as we exit we return. Significantly, we do not forget what we have read but it also does not change what the sentence is about. The revisions can then be represented parenthetically as:

Qesse-ye Sanjan { *The Parsees* { *The Early History* } } *Parsi Zoroastrians*

Although the historical sensibility of *Parsi Zoroastrians* represents a restoration of the historical thinking of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, there is a memory of *The Parsees* and *The Early History*. In a sense it contains an echo of nineteenth and twentieth century European methods of scientific historical inquiry, which means this sensibility is not lost. Rather a scientific history, in which the past is represented for the present, is not the topic of the sentence because the sentence is about a representation of the present in the past for the future.

1.4 Why and how a theory of historiographical agency, and the augmented historian was developed

In order to understand how the restoration of historical consciousness has come about, we must understand how history is produced. I have developed a theory of historiographical agency to understand how historical narratives, historical revisions, and distinct forms of historical consciousness are produced. What I am proposing is a counter-intuitive understanding of historical and historiographical change because we have a sense of agency in the world, or that we can attribute to a person the action of producing history. Yet as I will show, this attribution of agency is misplaced. Rather, the agent who knows the past and represents it narratively is in the space between a person, power, historiographical conventions, and media. In this space we find a historian who is augmented by power, methods to know the past, and the varying capabilities of the source and narrative media to transmit what happened in the past through time to the future. As a result, all historians are in fact augmented historians.[13] The best way to explain historiographical agency and the augmented historian is with a brief story of how and why I developed the framework.

13 I develop and apply the idea of material agency to historical consciousness. This will be developed in chapter three. Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris, *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach* (New York: Springer, 2010); Stewart Allen and others, "The Materiality of Knowledge Production," *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, no. 1 (2012): 31–51.

Early on in my doctorate I sought to understand each revision as the action of an individual historian seeking to explain a contingent shift in power. In a sense, the work of a historian is to explain how the present came to be. The historian responds to a contemporary inexplicable shift or a radical break, such as a revolution or conquest that existing histories are incapable of explaining. The work of the historian is to then revise history in order to explain how the new situation came to be.[14] In the case of the first revision, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, I understood the poem as a historical response to explain the recent shift in power with the Mughal Emperor Akbar's conquest of Parsi lands and the promulgation of a post-Islamic empire. This transformed the power relationship between Parsis, Hindus, and Muslims. Yet the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* could not historically explain later shifts with the decline of Mughal power and the development of British rule; the result was a new historical explanation in *The Parsees*. Similarly, *The Parsees* could not explain the shift in power with the challenge to colonial rule and Iran's rapprochement with its Zoroastrian past; the result was *The Early History.* Finally, the earlier revisions could not historically explain decolonisation, demographic decline, and globalisation, which led to the creation of *Parsi Zoroastrians.*

Yet as I sought to describe how a shift in power could provoke a historical response, there was a slippage in my language; I would describe power as acting rather than the author. Sometimes I would describe the author as an agent responding with a revision to shifts in power, and at other times the historical story itself was responding. Yet again at other times it was these shifts in power that were creating each revision. Each of these ways of explaining how history was revised were defensible depending upon the context. This slippage was a manifestation of a deeper and as yet unexplored tension in how I was thinking about agency.

The tension in attributing agency further manifested as I sought to understand the relationship between the historical consciousness expressed in each revision and the historiographical conventions of the time. I had come to understand each revision as a response to a shift in the conventions for marking a narrative as historical. This was a shift in how history ought to be researched and stylistic conventions for its narration. Just as in the case of shifts in power, a shift in conventions provoked a revision to mark Parsi history as historical. Consequently, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was a response to the development of Indo-Persian conventions for history, which were linked to the power shift with Akbar's

14 At this stage I was drawing upon the thinking about history of Jörn Rüsen, "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography," *History and Theory* 35, no. 4 (December 1, 1996): 5–22.

conquest. *The Parsees* was a revision to the new historiographical conventions that came with British conquest, and *The Early History* was produced by a shift towards empiricism, or a purely evidential and scientific approach to history. *Parsi Zoroastrians* was a response to a decline in conventions with the acceptability of non-conventional genres for narrating the past and methods for its acquisition. Again there was a slippage in my language describing how the revisions came to be in which I would describe the historiographical milieu as acting.

The question of agency shifted to the foreground when I wrote about the process by which media produced different forms of historical consciousness. I had come to understand that every medium has an economy that creates different narrative forms and methods for historical inquiry. This is because each medium augments our capacity to record the past and transmit it through time, thus creating different relationships between history and human memory. I had developed a framework for linking the form of historical consciousness to the qualities of the vehicle for transmitting the story and its sources. In this framework I compared the degrees of accessibility, reproducibility, and durability of different media. Accessibility is the size of the audience the media can reach, durability is the degree of human intervention required for the medium to transmit information through time, and reproducibility is the capacity of the medium to create exact copies. I was then understanding how we know the past and history's narrative conventions as a product of the medium's qualities. My argument was veering towards a form of technological determinism, or that a medium necessarily produces a particular form of history. The historical consciousness of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was then determined by the remediation to manuscript, *The Parsees* and *The Early History* to print, and *Parsi Zoroastrians* to the web. I was again attributing the production of history to a non-human agent.

The theoretical solution to the problem of historiography and agency crystallised when I read Lambros Malafouris' argument for material agency.[15] He argues that action exists in the space between humans and technology because agency is not solely the property of humans or technology. Malafouris terms this material agency, not because it is the world that acts and we do not, but as an explanatory tool to decentre ourselves. In material agency I had a theoretical foundation to examine within the same analytical frame the historian, the power relationships with which they engaged, the historical conventions

15 Lambros Malafouris, "At the Potter's Wheel: An Argument for Material Agency," in *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*, ed. Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris (New York: Springer, 2010).

of the time, and the media for sourcing and narrating history. It is these factors combined that create historiographical agency, or the agency to produce historical revisions and new forms of historical consciousness. Following Malafouris' lead I can then say, historiographical agency allows us to reconceptualise and diminish the role of humans in the production of history. We cannot then say that history is produced by an author on their own, by a medium, or by a particular epistemic milieu. Rather, the action to produce history is in the space in between each of these shifts, and it is in this space we find the augmented historian.

Each revision is produced by a differently augmented historian, or an agent who is augmented by different narrative and source media, power, and methods. These are fictional hybrid agents who help us understand how historical consciousness is transformed. At a general level different types of augmented historians can be identified from the oral-history-human, to the script-history-human, print-history-human, and web-history-human. These terms are hyphenated in order to emphasise that the medium, methods, and historian with their power relationships are all equal within this analytic frame and to emphasise that the human has no privileged role.

Strictly speaking, in my theory of historiographical agency we are misattributing agency if we say that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is the work of Bahman because he is not the agent that composed the poem and its distinct form of historical consciousness. More precisely, the revision was produced by an augmented historian I term script-history-bahman.[16] The action to produce this history was the result of the intersection of shifts in power wrought by Akbar, the development of Indo-Persian historiography, the remediation of an existing oral story to script, and an individual known as Bahman. Similarly, *The Parsees* was produced by the agent print-history-karaka who existed at the intersection of shifts in power with British colonial rule, the development of European historiography, the remediation of an existing story to print, and the man known as Karaka. The third revision studied, *The Early History*, was then the product of the agent print-history-paymaster-modi. Once again, this history was produced in the space between shifts in power with the decline of colonial rule, the emergence of positivist and empirical historiographical conventions, and the use of print, combined with two authors, Modi and Paymaster. Finally, *Parsi Zoroastrians* was produced by the agent web-history-cama who exists in the space between shifts in power with decolonisation, globalisation, and the Parsis' demographic decline, shifts in historiographical conventions with the decline of

16 I have deliberately written Bahman in lower case in order to avoid privileging the human author.

empiricism and the rise of a didactic sensibility, the remediation to the web, and the author Cama. And finally, this thesis is the work of screen-history-buck.

By bringing together a theory of historiographical agency and a theory of restoration, I can make a more general claim that the web-history-human expresses a form of augmented orality, because the historical thinking of today is a restoration of a preprint oral historical consciousness. Yet the restoration is seemingly paradoxical because orality is not augmented through external media while the web represents the most extreme form of augmentation. We can extrapolate the revisions and their agents into a general parenthetical relationship between the differently augmented historians as:

oral-history-human { script-history-human { print-history-human } } web-history-human

Significantly, for those of us living today it is possible to recognise that we are already the cyborgs of science fiction.[17] Cyborgs are cybernetic organisms in which an animal is augmented and often enhanced with technology. We are already cyborgs because we augment our biological memory with permanently attached internet connected electronic devices that double as phones. As a result we no longer need to remember raw information because the Internet remembers for us. But importantly, we are not only augmented by the Internet, we are also augmented by ways of knowing the past and power. As a result we are already historically conscious cyborgs.[18]

On the basis of this historiographical comparison and theory of agency, I go further by outlining how historical consciousness might appear in the distant future. There is a great irony in the outsourcing of our memory and knowledge to the Internet, which appears durable, but is in fact highly impermanent relative to other media. I propose this may result in the forgetting of how to be historically conscious and its replacement with a sense of the ever-present. In the spirit of decentring humans I finish by speculating how we might think about the relationship between historical consciousness and artificial intelligence, and sketch a revision of the Parsi story for an encounter between cyborgs and machine intelligence.

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17 For instance William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (London: HarperCollins, 1995); Mamoru Oshii, *Ghost in the Shell* (Kodansha, 1995); Rick Berman, "Star Trek: Voyager" (Paramount Television, 2001 1996); George Lucas, *Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope* (20th Century Fox; Lucasfilm Limited production, 1978).

18 I build upon Clark's understanding of the cyborg. I will discuss in more detail in chapter two. Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Allison Muri, *The Enlightenment Cyborg: A History of Communications and Control in the Human Machine, 1660-1830*, 2016; Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

1.5 Thesis structure and style

This thesis is organised into seventeen short chapters totalling 89,897 words. Chapter two overviews Parsi history and the scholarship on the community in order to establish the first original contribution of the dissertation as a historiographical study of their origin story. This is combined with an overview of the Parsi story so that the reader will be equipped with the necessary background knowledge to understand the revisions discussed throughout the thesis. Chapter three outlines the other three contributions of an interdisciplinary method for comparative historiography, a theory of historiographical agency, and a theory of restoration. The revisions are then studied chronologically in chapters four and five for the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, six to eight for *The Parsees*, nine to eleven for *The Early History*, and twelve to sixteen for *Parsi Zoroastrians*. The seventeenth chapter is a reflection on the future of historical consciousness. I have devoted different numbers of chapters to the revisions because there is more material for the contemporary and less for each revision going back in time. The first chapter examining each revision (that is four, six, nine, and twelve) understands the text as a historical response to explain a contingent shift in power. The subsequent chapters (five, seven, eight, eleven, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen) examine the historical sensibility the revision expresses, how it was transformed by the medium, and compares it to earlier revisions. Chapter sixteen summaries the restoration.

Stylistically I have employed a number of strategies to facilitate readability and to transport the reader into the eras discussed. Following Kirin Narayan's advice for writing ethnography, I have adopted George Orwell as my muse and written it in a style I like to read.[19] The thesis is written for a broader audience rather than specialists in the theory of history, media, anthropology, agency, or India. This is necessary as the thesis is so expansive, both thematically and in the disciplines from which it draws. Scholarly engagement is footnoted rather than discussed in text in order to avoid long arcane discussions of various people's positions. I have attempted to write as clearly as possible, choosing the simplest words and minimising the use of jargon. Sentences, paragraphs, and chapters are short with the chapters designed to be read in a single sitting. Section headings are used and numbered as visual cues for scanning the text, to aid comprehension, and facilitate navigation. Proper names have largely been used only for people who reoccur a number of times, with minor characters footnoted. In an attempt to capture something of the tenor of the past, I have used quotations wherever appropriate

19 Kirin Narayan, *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*, 2013.

and sought to represent each author in their own time. Quotations with different spelling are represented as is without using [sic]. Broadly, I have sought to fuse the story telling tradition of a historical narrative with a theoretical reflection.

I've come to think of the thesis as the outer layer of a Russian doll. Each doll represents a revision of a story and each successive layer moves backwards in time, from the largest and most recent, which is this thesis, to the innermost and oldest layer. The most recent and outer layer is the thesis itself, followed by *Parsi Zoroastrians*, *The Early History*, *The Parsees*, and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. Finally, the innermost perceptible layer is the oral tradition on which they are all based. There is no perceivable layer beneath the oral tradition because my method cannot reach; the innermost dolls are simply too small to see. Given that this thesis is a story of layers of history-telling, I have taken the liberty of writing myself into the Parsi story. In keeping with my theory of historiographical agency, the agent responsible for the production of this thesis is screen-history-buck.

2. The Parsi story

As noted, the first original contribution of this thesis is a historiographical study of the Parsis' changing origin story. Both Parsis and non-Parsis, scholars and non-scholars, have produced a substantial body of work studying Zoroastrianism, their history in India and pre-Islamic Iran, and the fate of Zoroastrianism following the Islamic conquest. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the Parsis' place in colonial India has been the subject of considerable attention. The three closest studies to my own are an anthropological study of the community's postcolonial memory of colonial era greatness and the tension produced by their historic siding with the British.[20] Another examines how the idea of Zarathustra as a prophet and his story has changed over time in both Iran and India.[21] The third examines how history is a marker of Iranian modernity and the Parsis' involvement in this development.[22] However, what is offered here for the first time is a historiographical study of the community's changing origin story through the Mughal, colonial, postcolonial, and now global eras. In order for readers to understand the Parsis, their story, historical revisions, how this thesis fits within the extant scholarship, I will narrate my own version of their three and a half thousand year long story. The four revisions will be introduced at the point in the story when they are composed and the chapters in which they are examined. In this way, the following overview engages with aspects of Parsi history covered in the four revisions.

The revisions of the Parsi story were selected by beginning with a contemporary revision and following its sources to an earlier revision and so on. This is a genealogical method.[23] Following the Russian doll metaphor, the first layer and point of inquiry was a contemporary production of the story, *Parsi Zoroastrians*. It was selected because of the sophisticated use of the web and it is an innovative leading Parsi historical project.[24] *Parsi Zoroastrians* builds upon and is a revision of an inner layer of contemporary oral traditions, postcolonial histories, colonial era European-style national empiricist histories. From the

20 Tanya M. Luhrmann, *The Good Parsi: The Fate of a Colonial Elite in a Postcolonial Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

21 Daniel Jensen Sheffield, "In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India" (Harvard University, 2012).

22 Monica M Ringer, *Pious Citizens: Reforming Zoroastrianism in India and Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

23 Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); Michel Foucault, *The birth of the clinic* (London: Routledge, 2003); Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 76–100; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

24 Interviews with Parzor members identified the sources of their revision.

colonial era histories I chose *The Early History* as it is an exemplary expression of an early twentieth century, or late colonial historical sensibility. This in turn led to another inner layer: a revision of the Parsis' first print history and ethnic national narrative, the mid-nineteenth century *The Parsees*. These three histories are all revisions of the late sixteenth century manuscript the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. The layer of revisions beneath the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* are only partially perceptible with my method as they belong to the pre-written oral tradition. Their remnant is an echo in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. However, for the sake of readability the revisions are examined chronologically rather than genealogically.

2.1 Zoroastrianism and ancient Iran

Parsi histories either begin or end with an account of their religion, which is commonly known as Zoroastrianism.[25] The origin and name of the religion are derived from a man variously known as Zarathustra, Zartosht, or Zoroaster whom contemporary Parsis consider a prophet.[26] He probably lived sometime between 1400 and 1700 BCE in what is now south-west Afghanistan. Our understanding of his teachings is derived from the accumulated tradition that has developed to this day and devotional hymns that he composed. These hymns are composed in a language similar to the most ancient Sanskrit hymns of Hindus.[27] They are from a similar time and represent two different developments of common proto-Indo-Iranian religion and language. Scholars have argued that Zoroastrianism is the first prophetic religion, the first to express the idea of heaven and hell, free will, and monotheism. Or put another way, it is regarded by some as a key source for the ideas expressed in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.[28] The ethical maxim of Zoroastrianism is "good thoughts, good words, good deeds". Contemporary Parsis widely consider themselves to be monotheists worshipping a god called Ahura Mazda. However over three millennia Zoroastrianism has changed and there is a convincing argument that it was dualistic, or that there was a good and an evil god who were conceptualised as completely separate.[29]

25 Parsis in India and Zoroastrians in Iran will often refer to themselves Zartoshtis.

26 I will refer to him as Zarathustra throughout the thesis. For a study of changing Parsi perceptions of Zarathustra see Sheffield, "In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India."

27 The Rig Veda.

28 Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 1; James Barr, "The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 2 (1985): 201–35; Barr.

29 This is the argument of Susan Stiles Maneck, *The Death of Ahriman: Culture Identity and Theological Change Among the Parsis of India* (Mumbai: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1996); There is a convincing argument that Zoroastrianism was not a defined set of beliefs and practices but was in fact a set of heterodox practices that became codified over time and particularly with the Sasanians. From the eighteenth century until today it has been the subject of study by Parsis and non-Parsis using Western methods and

Parsi histories proudly trace their ancestry through ancient kings who are credited with various social, technological, and economic developments. Zarathustra's conversion of a king begins a series of Zoroastrian dynasties and empires that at their peak were some of the largest in the ancient world. They conquered vast territory from modern day Egypt in the west, to Tajikistan in the north, and India in the east. They rose and fell through wars and interactions with the Pharaohs, Babylonians (in which they freed the Jews from captivity), ancient Hindus and Greeks. It is often said that European history writing began with Herodotus' *The Histories*, which was written in the mid fourth century BCE and tells the tale of war between the Greeks and a Zoroastrian Persian king. Later that dynasty came to an end following their defeat by the Greek commonly known as Alexander the Great.[30] The last Zoroastrian Empire began in 224 CE and lasted four centuries warring with Romans and then Byzantines before falling in 651CE in the first great conquest of the rising Muslim Empire.[31]

scholarship. This is not an exhaustive list Anquetil Duperron, *Extracts from the Narrative of Anquetil Du Perron's Travels in India, Chiefly Those Concerning His Researches in the Life and Religion of Zoroaster, and in the Ceremonial and Ethical System of the Same Religion as Contained in Zend and Pehlvi Books*, 1876; Martin Haug, *Lecture on the Origin of the Parsee Religion: Delivered on the 1st of March 1861 at the United Service Institution of Western India* (S.l.: Deccan Herald Press, 1861); Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938); Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza, *Sasanian Zoroastrianism* (Delhi: Delhi Parsi Anjuman, 1992); Mary Boyce and Frantz Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism* (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Mary Boyce, ed., *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990); Mary Boyce, "On Mithra's Part in Zoroastrianism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 32, no. 1 (January 1, 1969): 10–34; Mary Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); John R Hinnells, *The Parsis: A Bibliographical Survey* (Henley-on-Thames: Routledge, 1980); John R Hinnells, *Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies: Selected Works of John R. Hinnells* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT, USA: Ashgate, 2000); John R. Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora: Religion and Migration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Alan Williams and John R. Hinnells, eds., *Parsis in India and the Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Peter Clark, *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction to an Ancient Faith* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998); Albert de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997); Philip G Kreyenbroek and Shehnaz N Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism: Urban Parsis Speak about Their Religion / Philip G. Kreyenbroek in Collobration with Shehnaz Neville Munshi* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001); Nora Firby, *European Travellers and Their Perceptions of Zoroastrians in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1988); Mirza, *Sasanian Zoroastrianism*; Kayoji Mirza and Hormazdyar Kayoji Mirza, *The Zoroastrian Religion* (Bombay: K. Mirza, 1977); J. R. Russell, "Parsi Zoroastrian 'Garbās' and 'Monājāts,'" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1 (January 1, 1989): 51–63; Dastur Firoze M Kotwal, "A Brief History of the Parsi Priesthood," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 33, no. 3 (1990); Firoze Kotwal, "Some Observations on the History of the Parsi," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 37, no. 3 (1974): 664–69; Marietta Stepaniants, "The Encounter of Zoroastrianism with Islam," *Philosophy East and West* 52, no. 2 (April 1, 2002): 159–72; Rashna Writer, *Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unconstructed Nation* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994); Rashna Writer, "Parsi Identity," *Iran* 27 (January 1, 1989): 129–31; Nile Green, "The Survival of Zoroastrianism in Yazd," *Iran* 38 (January 1, 2000): 115–22.

30 For Iranians Alexander is often not referred to as the Great.

31 Richard Nelson Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran* (München: C.H. Beck, 1984); Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Civilization: From the Earliest Times to the Downfall of the Last Zoroastrian Empire 651 AD* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1922); For a study of how pre-Islamic Iran has been remembered see Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, "Contested Memories of Pre-Islamic Iran," *The Medieval History Journal* 2, no. 2 (October 1, 1999): 245–75; Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, "Contested Memories: Narrative Structures and Allegorical Meanings of Iran's Pre-Islamic History," *Iranian Studies* 29, no. 1/2 (January 1, 1996): 149–75; For a study of pre-Islamic Zoroastrian historical consciousness see Touraj Daryaee, "National History or Keyanid History?: The Nature of Sasanid Zoroastrian Historiography," *Iranian Studies* 28, no. 3/4 (July 1, 1995): 129–41.

2.2 Persecution in Iran

Parsis trace their descent to a group of Zoroastrians who departed for India by boat in order to preserve their religion in response to the progressive conversion of their brethren to Islam. The Parsi community is defined by a historical story and a religion; they are a diasporic ethno-religious community of Iranian Zoroastrians. In a sense, Parsiness, Parsi identity, and Parsis as a distinct group are constituted by a historical story. The Parsis are the world's foremost adherents of Zoroastrianism numbering 57,264 in India while the Zoroastrians in Iran number between 15,000 and 25,271.[32] The rest of the world's Zoroastrians are largely descended from Parsi emigrants from India. The global population of Zoroastrians is estimated to be between 111,000 and 122,000.[33]

Parsi histories often explain the conversion of Iranians to Islam as a result of persecution by Muslims and sometimes Arabs. However, their fate has been a matter of a debate amongst Parsis and in the scholarship since the early twentieth century due to the shortage of historical sources for the centuries following the Islamic conquest. Whether Zoroastrians were in fact persecuted and which of these histories is the most accurate is not the focus of this thesis. Rather, I am interested in how a story of persecution is used and changes over time.

In order for readers to contextualise the debates and the story I will briefly survey the five main scholarly positions. The most common is that Zoroastrians were persecuted by either Arabs or Iranian Muslim converts. This led to what one Iranian scholar has described as the "Zoroastrian apocalypse"[34] in which they were forced to convert or pay a poll tax, enslaved, humiliated, and their temples destroyed.[35] The second position argues that Zoroastrians were not persecuted because Muslims considered them followers of the

32 Iranian Zoroastrians are also not generally referred to as Parsis. There is also another smaller Zoroastrian community in India called Iranis who migrated to India in the nineteenth century. They are generally not called Parsis. There are also other Hindu communities who were probably Zoroastrian and predated the Parsis' arrival. Up until recently the Parsis have been mostly endogamous, they only marry each other.

33 Roshan Rivetna, "The Zarathushti World, a 2012 Demographic Picture," *FEZANA Journal* 27 (Fall 2013), http://fezana.org/downloads/ZoroastrianWorldPopTable_FEZANA_Journal_Fall_2013.pdf; Zubin Shroff and Marcia C Castro, "The Potential Impact of Intermarriage on the Population Decline of the Parsis of Mumbai, India," *Demographic Research* 25 (August 26, 2011): 545–64; From the 2011 census Nergish Sunavala, "Alarming 18% Decline in Parsi Population since 2001 Census Has Community Worried - Times of India," *Times of India*, July 25, 2016, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/Alarming-18-decline-in-Parsi-population-since-2001-census-has-community-worried/articleshow/53387279.cms.

34 Touraj Daryaee, *Iranian kingship, the Arab conquest and Zoroastrian apocalypse: the history of Fars and beyond in late antiquity (600-900 CE)* (Mumbai: KR Cama Oriental Institute, 2012).

35 Dosabhai Framji Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co, 1884); Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.* (Bombay: British India Press, 1917); Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza, *Outlines of Parsi History* (Bombay: Mirza, 1974), 186–225; Khojeste P Mistree, "Parsi Arrival and Early Settlements in India," in *A Zoroastrian Tapestry*, ed. P. J. Godrej and F. P. Mistree (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2002), 411–33.

one God, similar to Christians and Jews. Rather, their migration was for economic reasons: Zoroastrian merchants lost state support.[36] A third explanation argues the Parsis' ancestors migrated earlier when Zoroastrian empires conquered parts of India. Parsis then learnt the persecution story from Zoroastrians who fled Iran following the conquest of the Mongols in the eleventh century. A fourth explanation is that the Parsis' ancestors were orthodox Zoroastrians who could not countenance the syncretic fusion of religious ideas between Islam and Zoroastrianism in the centuries following the conquest. They were similar to the American Puritans who left to preserve their religion.[37] The final position argues that the Arab conquest was based upon a Muslim Arab army who were not taxed and a Zoroastrian peasantry who were. Zoroastrians converted to escape the poll-tax, raise their social status as soldiers, and because Islam may have been appeared as prophetic given the succession of victories by Muslim armies.[38]

2.3 Parsi history until the arrival of the British

Their history in India until the arrival of Europeans in the seventeenth century is also a matter of debate although it can be partially reconstructed. Material unearthed at a recent archaeological dig suggests that the Parsis arrived in Sanjan in the eighth or ninth century CE.[39] Sanjan lies on the west coast of India in what is today the Indian state of Gujarat about 150km north of Mumbai.[40] The existence of Zoroastrian buildings over Gujarat suggests that they spread. Although the Parsis became spectacularly wealthy, the economic status of the community in this era is also a matter of debate.[41]

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36 André Wink, *Al-Hind, the Making of the Indo-Islamic World* (Leiden ;;New York: E.J. Brill, 1990); Gushtaspshah Kaikhushro Nariman and Rustom Burjorji Paymaster, *Writings of G. K. Nariman (Orientalist and Linguist)* (Bombay, India: R.B. Paymaster, 1935).

37 Mani Kamerkar and Soonu Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat* (Mumbai: Allied Publishers, 2002).

38 Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Daniel Clement Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ Press, 2013).

39 Rukshana J Nanji and Homi Dhalla, "The Landing of the Zoroastrians at Sanjan: The Archaeological Evidence," in *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, ed. Alan Williams and John R. Hinnells (New York: Routledge, 2007), 35–58; Rukshana J Nanji, *Mariners and Merchants: A Study of the Ceramics from Sanjan (Gujarat)* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2011).

40 Bombay was officially renamed Mumbai in 1995. Throughout the thesis I will refer to the city as Mumbai. During fieldwork Parsis would call the city Bombay when speaking in English and Mumbai when speaking in Gujarati or Hindi.

41 Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*; Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *A Few Events in the Early History of the Parsis and Their Dates* (Mumbai: The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 2004); Much of the early history of the community is contained in Gujarati histories written by Parsis such as Manekshah S. Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., 1938); Manekshah S. Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1957); Edalji Dosabhai, *A History of Gujarát : From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1986); Bomanjee Byramjee Patell, *Parsee Prakash: being a record of important events in the growth of the Parsee community in western India: chronologiclly arranged from the date of their immigration into India to the year 1860 A.D.*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Duftur Ashkara Press, 1888); Shahpurshah Hormasji Hodivala, *Studies in*

Chapters four and five examine the community's oldest extant written history, the 1599 *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. It is a Persian-language poem written in the Gujarati town of Navsari by a Parsi priest named Bahman Kay Qobad Sanjana. In epic style he tells a tale of Zoroastrian kings, Iranian empires, the promulgation of their religion, of their defeat by Muslims, and persecution in Iran that precipitated their departure to India by boat. On arrival the Hindu king gives five conditions for granting asylum: an explanation of their religion, that they learn Gujarati, lay down their weapons, conduct their marriage ceremonies at night, and that Zoroastrian women will wear the same clothes as Hindus. The priest agrees to the conditions and explains their religious practices emphasising the similarities with Hinduism whilst understating the differences; he then finishes with a profession of friendship and a pact to defend India. The Zoroastrians consecrate a temple with a fire named the Iranshah, or the King of Iran. They prosper for centuries and disperse over India until an invasion by a Muslim king. In response a Hindu king calls upon the Parsis to fulfil the treaty they made with his ancestors and defend India. Together they fight the invading army and are initially victorious before their defeat in a second battle. The Parsis are dispersed and take the Iranshah into hiding before its return years later to the town of Navsari where the poem was composed.

The poem has been the subject of considerable community and scholarly attention. The foremost contemporary analysis by Alan Williams understands the poem as both a mirror of late 16th century Parsi practices rather than as a work of history and also a guide for 21st century Parsis as they disperse across the world. The poem has also been understood as a source for early Parsi history and as a story that explains and guides their contemporary relationship with Hindus.[42] However, for the first time I will seek to understand the poem within the historical context of the post-Islamic rule of the Mughal emperor Akbar and the development of a new historiographical tradition that has come to be known as Indo-Persian.

I chose the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* as it is the first extant written account of the Parsis' origin story. There is another, later, revision of the Parsi origin story produced in the 18th

Parsi History (Bombay: Shahpurshah Hormasji Hodivala, 1920); Kharsedji Nasarvanji. Seervai and Bamanji Behramji Patel, *Gujarát Pársis, from Their Earlies Settlement to the Present Time (1898)* (Bombay, 1898); Mistree, "Parsi Arrival and Early Settlements in India"; Maneck Pithawalla, *The Gujarat Region and the Parsees: A Historico-Geographical Survey* (Karachi, 1945).

42 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*; H E Eduljee, *Kisseh-i Sanjan* (Bombay: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1991); Paul Axelrod, "Myth and Identity in the Indian Zoroastrian Community," *Journal of Mithraic Studies* 3 (1980): 150–65; Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*; Modi, *A Few Events in the Early History of the Parsis and Their Dates*.

century titled *Qesse-ye Zartoshtian-e Hendustan* by Shapurji Maneckji Sanjana.[43] This work is a revision of Bahman's *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. I chose not to examine *Qesse-ye Zartoshtian-e Hendustan* as it and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* are manuscripts and my thesis examines how the remediation from one medium to another transforms historical thinking.

2.4 The colonial period

A year after the poem's composition, on the other side of the world, the British East India Company was founded. Over the next two and half centuries it conquered India. The Company established its first trading post in Surat, which was the port for the then dominant Mughal Empire. Surat is located about 20km from Navsari and both towns contained a considerable Parsi presence. Parsis became wealthy trading opium and cotton, built ships, invested in banks, became land owners, started newspapers and then became industrialists involved in cotton mills, steel, and textiles.[44] They were at the forefront of the professions in law, journalism, education, and pointedly for India, their first cricket team was composed entirely of Parsis.[45]

Chapters six, seven, and eight examine the Parsis' first English language print history titled *The Parsees: their history, manners, customs, and religion* by Dosabhai Framji Karaka (1829-1902).[46] It was published in 1858 in the midst of a sustained uprising against British rule. Karaka wrote it to assure the British of the Parsis' loyalty comparing their present day

43 Shapurji Maneckji Sanjana and Carlo G Cereti, *An 18th Century Account of Parsi History : The Qesse-Ye Zartoštian-e Hendustān* (Napoli : Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, 1991).

44 Balkrishna Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century: A Study of Urban History of Pre-Modern India* (London: Curzon Press, 1979), 8.

45 The colonial period has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention. For instance see Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change* (Munchen: Weltforum-Verlag GmbH, 1974); Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Jesse S. Palsetia, "The Parsis of India and the Opium Trade in China," *Contemporary Drug Problems* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 647+; Jesse S. Palsetia, "Merchant Charity and Public Identity Formation in Colonial India: The Case of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2005): 197–217; Williams and Hinnells, *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*; Hinnells, *Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies*; Christine E Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972); David White, *Competition and Collaboration: Parsi Merchants and the English East India Company in 18th Century India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1995); Mitra Sharafi, *Colonial Parsis and Law: A Cultural History: Government Research Fellowship Lectures 2009-2010* (Mumbai: K R Cama Oriental Institute, 2010); Rusheed Wadia, "Colonial Trade and Parsi Entrepreneurs," in *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005), 616–39; Amalendu Guha, "Parsi Seths as Entrepreneurs, 1750-1850," *Economic and Political Weekly* 5, no. 35 (1970); Amalendu Guha, "The Comprador Role of Parsi Seths, 1750-1850," *Economic and Political Weekly* 5, no. 48 (November 28, 1970): 1933–36; Amalendu Guha, "More about the Parsi Seths: Their Roots, Entrepreneurship and Comprador Role, 1650-1918," *Economic and Political Weekly* 19, no. 3 (January 21, 1984): 117–32; Kathryn Hansen, "Staging Composite Culture," *South Asia Research* 29, no. 2 (July 1, 2009): 151–68; Nawaz B. Mody, ed., *Pherozeshah Mehta: Maker of Modern India* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1997); Nawaz B. Mody, ed., *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920* (Bombay: Bombay Allied Publishers, 1999); Ringer, *Pious Citizens*.

46 Karaka, *The Parsees*.

prosperity with the earlier chaotic rule of Hindus and oppression by Muslims. Karaka belonged to the first generation of Parsis educated at English schools and universities. Here he learnt the methods of British scholarship that he employed to revise the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* into an ethnic national narrative.

Chapters nine, ten, and eleven study *The Early History of the Parsees in India* by Rustom Burjorji Paymaster (1870-1943). Although it was published posthumously in 1954, research was initiated in 1911 by a Parsi scholar priest named Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (1854-1933). He was a knight of the British Empire, held a doctorate, was a president of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, and a highly influential member of the community. He published fifty books on Zoroastrianism and the Parsis exploring their relationship with India, Hinduism, and the West using comparative philology, anthropology, and history.[47] Due to Modi's failing health *The Early History* was completed by Paymaster, the then editor of the Parsi chronicle. The book revises the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and *The Parsees* together with new sources in order to narrate a new version of the Parsi story from their defeats in Iran to their arrival in India leading up to the nineteenth century with biographical accounts of leading Parsis. *The Early History* seeks to resolve vitriolic disputes within the community concerning the historical accuracy of the persecution narrative and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. These debates were provoked by Modi's proposal to build a column in Sanjan to commemorate the Parsis flight from persecution and the refuge granted by a Hindu king. The book was composed in the context of the looming end of British rule and seeks to realign the Parsis with Hindus against Muslims.[48]

2.5 Parsis today

Today the Parsis are still an enormously wealthy and influential community. It will be helpful for the reader to place Parsi wealth in the context of India as a whole. The income level at which a Parsi is considered poor by the community, and therefore in need of community support, is more than ten times the average Indian's income.[49] By Indian standards there are very few poor Parsis, although this is not to suggest that all Parsis are

47 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*.

48 While there has been an academic discussion of Modi, this text has not been the subject of scholarly attention. See Sheffield, "In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India"; Ringer, *Pious Citizens*.

49 The Gross National Income per capita in India is USD1590. In order for a Parsi to be considered in need of community support their income needs to be less than USD15756 per year. See Rosy Sequeira, "Poor Parsi Redefined: One Who Earns up to Rs 90,000 per Month," *The Times of India*, June 12, 2012, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/Poor-Parsi-redefined-One-who-earns-up-to-Rs-90000-per-month/articleshow/14035654.cms; The World Bank, World Development Indicators (2015), "GNI per Capita, Atlas Method," accessed December 14, 2016, http://data.worldbank.org/country/india.

wealthy or middle class. Nevertheless, Parsis' work disproportionately in the professions and business. In India and globally the most visible symbol of the community is the Tata group of companies that was founded in the nineteenth century. Tata is one of India's largest corporate groups manufacturing cars, trucks, steel, producing power, and providing telecommunications. With globalisation Tata companies have become a leading provider of Information Technology outsourcing to the West. It is a source of pride in India that they purchased the British automotive companies Range Rover and Jaguar. Pointedly for a thesis that studies historical consciousness and the Internet, Tata Communications is one of six global companies that provide the backbone for the Internet. The backbone is the underpinning global infrastructure that provides the glue to make the Internet a network of networks.

However, the community's continuing financial prosperity is tempered by a sense of inevitable decline as their population plummets. The end of colonial rule and then globalisation has coincided with a 37.7% decline between 1951 and 2001. The reasons are debated within the community and outside however what is certain is that their population has aged, they have few children, many have emigrated abroad, and large numbers marry outside the community.[50] The despair for Parsis is compounded by the increasing difficulty of performing their funeral rites. When a Zoroastrian dies their body is placed on a tower to be eaten by vultures, which avoids ritually polluting fire, earth, water, or air. Yet due to a variety of reasons there is a shortage of vultures in Mumbai and their bodies decay uneaten on the towers. I find it ironic that Zoroastrianism is premised upon cycles of creation and destruction, yet Parsis are struggling to create new generations or conduct their funeral ceremonies.

Chapters twelve to fifteen study the final revision that is produced by an organisation called Parzor, or PARsi ZORoastrian. The organisation seeks to understand and reverse their demographic decline while also preserving the vanishing heritage of the community. Parzor was created by a Parsi named Shernaz Cama together with UNESCO India. My interest is in a revision of the Parsi story they first published on the World Wide Web in 2014 titled *Parsi Zoroastrians: From Persia to Akbar's Court — Weaving a Story of*

50 Shroff and Castro, "The Potential Impact of Intermarriage on the Population Decline of the Parsis of Mumbai, India"; Paul Axelrod, "Cultural and Historical Factors in the Population Decline of the Parsis of India," *Population Studies* 44, no. 3 (November 1, 1990): 401–19; Leela Visaria, "Demographic Transition among Parsis: 1881-1971: I: Size of Parsi Population," *Economic and Political Weekly* 9, no. 41 (October 12, 1974): 1735–41; Sapur Faredun Desai, *A Community at the Cross-Road* (Bombay: New Book Co, 1948); Firoze C. Davar, *Parsis and Racial Suicide* (Bombay: Dinar Printery, 1940); Sapur Faredun Desai, *Parsis and Eugenics* (Bombay: The Author, 1940); Khojeste P Mistree, *Zoroastrianism: An Ethnic Perspective* (Bombay, India: Zoroastrian Studies, 1982).

Culture, Continuity and Change.[51] *Parsi Zoroastrians* is a historical response to globalisation that builds upon earlier postcolonial Parsi histories that revise the community's colonial era pact with the British. Parsis are reinterpreted as Indian nationalists at the forefront of the anti-colonial struggle. While many Parsis supported colonial rule, there were also members of the community who played important roles in the Indian independence struggle.

My interest in Parzor is not to evaluate whether the project successfully preserves the Parsis' past, whether the account is accurate or provides a helpful guide, or even whether the community is in demographic decline. Rather, Parzor is a window into one contemporary history-telling. It is a case-study into how one group of Parsis headed by Shernaz Cama know their origin in India and how this is represented in narrative form. In the thesis I have sought to present how Parzor represent history in order to compare one form of historical consciousness against antecedents within the community in order to understand how historical thinking is transformed.

I should also acknowledge that the Parsi community is highly fractious and Parzor represents one particular vision of the community's past, present, and future. For many Parsis I interviewed their demographic decline is not important and for some Parsis the community and their history is not important. Parsi debates about their demographic decline are particularly vitriolic and Parzor represents one of a number of Parsi positions. I am not seeking to evaluate Parzor.

Parsi Zoroastrians was not the only contemporary revision of the Parsi origin story I could have examined. There are book histories, novels, plays, and oral accounts.[52] I decided against these as my research interest is to understand how different media and technology, historiographical conventions, and shifts in power relationships transform historical thinking. In particular I wanted to understand how the Internet transforms historical consciousness relative to print, script, and orality. There are also a number of other online Parsi accounts of their history from Youtube videos to static websites and Facebook groups.[53]

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51 Cama and Singh, "Parsi Zoroastrians."

52 Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*; Mistree, "Parsi Arrival and Early Settlements in India"; Hormazdyar Jamshedji Mancherji Desai, *History of the Parsis of Navsari* (Mumbai: World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, 2008); Bakhtiar K Dadabhoy, *Sugar in Milk: Lives of Eminent Parsis* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2008); Bapsi Sidhwa, *Cracking India: A Novel* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Milkweed Editions, 1991); Boman Desai, *The Memory of Elephants* (Kent: Sceptre, 1990).

53 K. E. Eduljee, "1. Qissa-e Sanjan Selections & Early Parsi History," accessed August 6, 2014, http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/history/qissa1.htm; *Qissa-e Parsi: The Parsi Story (Trailer)*, 2014, http://vimeo.com/102907721; *PARSIS -From Persia to India Part 1: Quisseh e Senjan*, 2013, http://vimeo.com/63972090; *India Taaro Upkar*, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyiXeLkUT2M&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

I chose *Parsi Zoroastrians* because of the unique and sophisticated fusion of oral, manuscript, and print versions of the Parsi story using the web. Parzor's site seamlessly integrates text, images, and video remediating oral, manuscript, and print sources. The images are of paintings and photos while the video shows Parsis singing and priests reciting prayers and performing rituals. Text links the images and video into a narrative covering the same time period as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan.* The site's history begins with Zoroastrianism, before detailing ancient Iranian empires, persecution, escape, the Parsi encounter with Hindus and the Sugar in the Milk story, and in the final sections describes their contribution to India and how they have mixed.

Parzor's remediation is made possible by the use of tools developed by Google.[54] The content is provided by Parzor and the site built using "story telling tools and platforms"[55] developed by the Google Cultural Institute and hosted by Google. The Institute was founded by Steve Crossan following a collaboration with the Israel Museum in Jerusalem to digitise the Dead Sea Scrolls. He is both a software engineer and a historian. In an interview with the *New York Times* he stated:

> We're building services and tools that help people get culture online, help people preserve it online, promote it online and eventually even create it online.[56]

It is the use of Google's tools that allow for a more sophisticated remediation compared to other Parsi websites that narrate Parsi history which are built using earlier web technologies.[57]

54 This is one of today's most influential Internet corporations.

55 Google, "About the Google Cultural Institute," accessed February 3, 2016, https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/about.

56 Eric Pfanner, "Quietly, Google Puts History Online," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/21/technology/quietly-google-puts-history-online.html.

57 Parzor and Parsi Zoroastrians has also not, so far, been the subject of scholarly attention. For earlier forms of web history see Noshir H. Dadrawala, "The Parsees, Their History and Contribution to the Indian Society," Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia, accessed August 6, 2014, http://www.zawa.asn.au/history2.shtml; "History of the Parsi People," accessed August 6, 2014, http://www.parsi.com/parsihistory.html; Eduljee, "1. Qissa-e Sanjan Selections & Early Parsi History"; "The Story of Dasturji Meherji Rana and Other Zarathushtri Stories," accessed February 25, 2013, http://tenets.zoroastrianism.com/meher33.html.

3. Historiographical agency and the restoration

The methodological and theoretical contributions of this thesis began with a phone call from my Gujarati teacher. He called to tell me about a play in his hometown of Navsari that performed a number of local stories including the Sugar in the Milk. He had acted in the play and proudly described how his son had written the script for one story. This story told of a meeting in the late nineteenth century between the Navsari born scion of the Parsi Tata conglomerate and a famous Hindu guru.[58] For his son, this journey linked his town of Navsari to one of his favourite teachers. He first learned of the story on a website that was in turn revised from a Gujarati history book, and from these two sources he imaginatively created a dialogue of the meeting that was performed in the play.

After hearing this story I started to think about how a historical narrative is transformed as it is revised from one medium to the next. I emailed one of my supervisors, and he suggested I read Marshall McLuhan.[59] As a history student with an interest in anthropology I knew McLuhan's name but had no conception of media studies. After reading McLuhan and other media studies theorists I started to think about how the Sugar in the Milk story and Parsi history has been transformed as it has been retold from one medium to the next.[60]

At that point in time I was searching for a theoretical framework to understand Parsi history-telling and was reading about comparative historiography and historical consciousness. My interest was in different forms historical consciousness, or methods and conventions for knowing and narrating the past, that appeared both across the world and over time. It seemed to me that in order to understand a historical tradition we needed to do so comparatively. Comparative historiography is concerned with how we compare different traditions for knowing and narrating the past. Essentially the comparison turns on a question of what constitutes a historical work. Can we say that some people produce history and have historical consciousness whilst others do not? Is history a modern European invention and do other peoples come into history through the colonial encounter, or can we say history encompasses the diverse ways of knowing the past expressed by different peoples over time? Yet, as I will show, none of the existing approaches were sufficient, which suggested a new approach to comparative

58 This is Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata (1839-1904) and Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). They were both aboard a ship travelling to the United States of America albeit for different reasons.

59 Assa Doron.

60 McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*; Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*.

historiography was required and the new approach I proffer is the second contribution of this thesis.

When reading the scholarship on historiography it occurred to me there was an underappreciation of the relationship between the medium and a historian's capacity to know the past. There were studies examining how individual media such as print transformed historical thinking but there were no helpful theoretical frameworks for understanding how media in general transforms history.[61] I felt I needed a conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between historical consciousness on one hand and on the other the source media for a history and the medium for its narration. It appeared to me that introducing the medium to the question of historical consciousness would allow a different approach to understanding history and the meeting of different historical traditions.

The problem with introducing the study of media and technology into historiography is the historians' injunction against attributing agency to anyone but humans. In the classical view humans are the agents of historical change and technology does not act, yet it appeared to me that technology was also an agent. The solution lay in a theory of material agency from science and technology studies. Simply put, agency is neither attributable to humans nor to technology but exists in the interplay between us and the world. Over the course of the following pages I will outline a theory of historiographical agency, which is my third contribution.

Moreover, as I examined the revisions of the story I noticed similarities between the earliest written revision and the most recent produced on the web. This offered a tantalising reflection on the relationship between premodern and contemporary historical thinking. Again, media studies was helpful as there was already an existing theory of restoration, which postulated that modes of cognition existing prior to print are being restored with the Internet. My final contribution is to introduce a theory of restoration to historiography.

61 Ann Rigney, "When the Monograph Is No Longer the Medium: Historical Narrative in the Online Age1," *History and Theory* 49, no. 4 (2010): 100–117; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (London; New York: Verso, 2005); Anita Kasabova, "Memory, Memorials, and Commemoration," *History and Theory* 47, no. 3 (2008): 331–350; Peter Burke, "Performing History: The Importance of Occasions," *Rethinking History* 9, no. 1 (2005): 35–52; Rüsen is the exception and I will discuss him shortly Rüsen, "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography."

3.1 The question of history

In order to understand how historical thinking is transformed we first need to reflect upon what history is. Why are some narratives of the past considered historical and others not? On what grounds do we differentiate between historical and ahistorical thinking? What then is historical consciousness? In answering these questions we need to be mindful of the political ramifications as history is a powerful tool to organise disparate individuals into a group based on a story of shared origins. Indeed, describing a people's history as historical or mythical is a truth claim that a shared past is real. In order to address these questions we need a solid conceptual framework to understand the historical development of how the question of history has come to be formulated.

The questions that are asked in comparative historiography and history in general owe much to the ancient Greek formulation of the idea of history as distinct from myth, and of the idea of history as both a narrative and an inquiry. Herodotus, the fifth century author of *The Histories,* is widely considered the founder of history. It is fitting for a thesis on the history-telling of a community of Zoroastrians that Herodotus' account is of the wars between the Greeks and one of the Zoroastrian dynasties of ancient Iran. Herodotus, in his inquiries into what had happened in the wars, distinguished between historia*,* or events and peoples that he could know through inquiry, and mythoi which were legends told by bards. He combined the two into a story of peoples and places. *The Histories* are the first work of prose in Europe and it is written prose that has come to define a historical work. In this formulation history was both the past, that is what has happened, and its narration, or a method for rendering the past in narrative form. This dual meaning still exists in English, French, German and Arabic.[62] From the Renaissance some within western Europe came to see themselves as the inheritors of Greek civilisation, including its historical thought. With colonial conquest this formulation of history became the standard against which other historical traditions were judged.

Broadly, from the late eighteenth century in Germany a group of historians came to define a modern understanding of history. They drew upon the Greek distinction of history and myth in order to define a science of history, or an explicit method for knowing the past and representing it in narrative form. This was a narrower definition of history that is often termed historicism. It developed in opposition to Enlightenment

62 Collingwood and Dussen, *The Idea of History*; Peter G Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula: Myths and Legends in Historical Thought from Antiquity to the Modern Age* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1994), 24; Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006); William H. Dray, *Philosophy of History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1993).

thinking that posited universal ideas and values. For the historicists, the past was understood as a historical development and nothing was eternal or universal. The focus of the inquiry was individual events and people, which were understood on their own irreducible terms. This method sought to understand and represent the past as it was, within its context.[63] History became an epistemological problem of how the past is known. History was defined as historicism and as such historical consciousness became a consciousness of historicism, or a consciousness of a particular method of historical inquiry.[64] Comparative historiography then became a comparison of methods or their absence; a comparison between historicism and the ahistorical. Therefore, if a people did not understand the past in this mode they were deemed to be without historical thought, they were ahistorical. In this schema some western Europeans possessed historical consciousness and other peoples did not.[65] The implication was that if a people did not understand the past in a historicist mode, they were outside of history. Thus, to be aware of history is to enter into history itself.

How we think about history is critical in the case of India because its definition and the question of historical consciousness both justified colonialism and provoked an outpouring of European style histories. The form and existence of historical thought in India has been a topic of fascination from the Arab historian Al Biruni in the eleventh century to the German philosopher Georg Hegel, to the father of modern history Leopold von Ranke, to the communist Karl Marx, the liberal James Mill, and through to the present.[66] For key nineteenth century Europeans, historical consciousness was the genius of Western civilisation. In this schema ancient Hindus had no temporal awareness, their ancient epics did not locate events in time or space, and they did not understand how the present came to be through a method that understood the past on its own terms. This schema was widely agreed upon by the British, Parsis, and elite Hindus. As a result, in the

63 Frederick C Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Donald R Kelley, *Fortunes of History Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

64 Gadamer and Fantel, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness"; Hans-Georg Gadamer, Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G Marshall, *Truth and Method* (London; New York: Continuum, 2004).

65 Across Europe there were a variety of historical traditions, but as the nineteenth century progressed a science of the past became dominant.

66 Muhammad ibn Ahmad Biruni and Eduard Sachau, *Alberuni's India. An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030*, vol. 1 (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., ltd., 1910), 10–11; Georg G Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century from Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, published by University Press of New England, 1997), 30; Lal, *The History of History*, 30–31; Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 180–83; Sheldon Pollock, "Mimamsa and the Problem of History in Traditional India," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109, no. 4 (October 1, 1989): 603–10; Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography*; Ranjan Ghosh, "India, Itihasa, and Inter-Historiographical Discourse," *History and Theory* 46, no. 2 (May 1, 2007): 210–17; Romila Thapar, *The Past before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India*, 2013.

nineteenth century and beyond, Parsis and elite Hindus sought to fill this supposed void with their own accounts of their religion, community, India and ancient Iran using a European sensibility.[67]

Broadly there have been three responses to the charge that Indians were ahistorical. The first asserts that the more than two millennia old Hindu epics, such as the Mahabharata, expressed a form of historical consciousness.[68] The second celebrates its absence. For instance Mahatma Gandhi writes:

> I believe in the saying that a nation is happy that has no history. It is my pet theory that our Hindu ancestors solved the question for us by ignoring history as it is understood today and by building on slight events their philosophical structure. Such is the Mahabharata. And I look upon Gibbon and Motley as inferior editions of the Mahabharata.[69]

Following this line of thinking, a section of postcolonial scholars reject history in favour of myth.[70] The third and more recent approach focuses on vernacular histories in the early modern period, rejecting the question of Indian historical consciousness or its absence. In this approach India is not understood as a whole but as a collection of different peoples with their own specific historical traditions.[71] This thesis broadly fits within the third approach. The dichotomy of history and myth, or history and its absence, obscures the far more interesting question of understanding how a people's relationship to the past changes over time.

The question of history shifted with the literary turn that occurred in historical studies in the post-war period. The self-assuredness of a modern European method to

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67 Lal, *The History of History*.

68 Romila Thapar, "Interpretations of Ancient Indian History," *History and Theory* 7, no. 3 (1968): 318–35; Thapar, *The Past before Us*.

69 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Electronic Book)*, vol. 29 (New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India, 1999), 134, http://www.gandhiserve.org/e/cwmg/cwmg.htm.

70 Nandy, "History's Forgotten Doubles"; Nandy, "Time Travel to a Possible Self"; Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: Silent and Evasive Pasts in Indian Politics and Religion* (London: Hurst, 2002); Lal, *The History of History*.

71 Sheldon Pollock, "India in the Vernacular Millennium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000-1500," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (July 1, 1998): 41–74; Raziuddin Aquil and Partha Chatterjee, eds., *History in the Vernacular* (Ranikhet; Bangalore: Permanent Black ; Distributed by Orient Longman, 2008); Sumit Guha, "Speaking Historically: The Changing Voices of Historical Narration in Western India, 1400-1900," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (October 1, 2004): 1084–1103; B. D. Chattopadhyaya, "Cultural Plurality Contending Memories and Concerns of Comparative History: Historiography and Pedagogy in Contemporary India," in *Time and History: The Variety of Cultures*, ed. Jörn Rüsen (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 151–68; Daud. Ali, ed., *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia* (New Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Arjun Appadurai, "The Past as a Scarce Resource," *Man* 16, no. 2 (June 1, 1981): 201–19.

represent the past in narrative form was undermined and consequently the alleged genius of this sensibility relative to others. The literary turn led to a focus on form: how history manifests itself as a narrative and how this is similar to other literary forms. History is then understood using the methods of literary analysis. This approach critically evaluates the claim of Western history to represent the past as it was. One of the key proponents is Hayden White who asks: Why do two historians of equal erudition write very different explanatory histories about the same event? For instance, why do two historians with the same source material write very different explanations of the French revolution? He argues that a historical narrative is prefigured by a particular literary trope.[72] The work of history is to imaginatively make sense of the world; it is a narrative representation of it.[73] The realness of history is not so much its representation of events and people as they actually were but the realness of the representation itself. This way of thinking about historical narrative encompasses all the versions of the Parsi story studied. They are all narrative works that imaginatively use the past to create an understanding of what is real to the Parsis: their existence.[74]

The problem with the literary approach is that there is an over-focus on narrative and an undervaluing of the method by which the raw material of the narrative is acquired.[75] In short, history becomes literature. If we say that all stories are historical then history becomes meaningless, it turns into a synonym for story and becomes indistinguishable from other forms of literature; history becomes a meaningless conceptual category. However history is different from fictional storytelling because it is about events that are purported to have happened and there is a method to acquire the raw material of the story. The response of historians from the 1990s was a reorientation away from an excessive focus on literary form and the relativism that marked this earlier period, together with an increased openness to other disciplines such as anthropology.[76] I should also note, White examines the claims of nineteenth century European historians in isolation, but I would suggest the capacity of European history to know and represent the past needs to be understood in relation to other media, eras, and historiographical traditions.

72 Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

73 Hayden White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," *History and Theory* 23, no. 1 (February 1, 1984): 1–33.

74 This thesis is informed by a reading of narratology. See Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (University of Toronto Press, 2009); Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009).

75 Aviezer Tucker, *Our Knowledge of the Past a Philosophy of Historiography* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

76 Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography*, 375–78.

The question of history has been turned on its head by postcolonial theorists such as Dipesh Chakrabarty who have used the question of history in India to reflect back upon the claims of European historical thought. Chakrabarty asks whether it is in fact possible to write a history for people who are outside of history. This question is used to reflect upon the conditions that make historical thought possible.[77] These theorists use a variety of approaches to work through the meeting of a historical tradition developed in Europe and the experience of peoples in India.[78] There are three aspects of postcolonial theory that are helpful for this project. Firstly, it allows an understanding of why the question of historical consciousness was asked in the case of India, and how such a question was instrumental for colonial rule. Secondly, the relationship between knowledge and power allows an understanding of the interdependence of modes of historical knowledge and the Parsis' various power relationships.[79] Thirdly, it helps us understand some of the legacies of colonial era thought in postcolonial India. The limitation of postcolonial theory is that it does not help us understand what historical consciousness was prior to colonisation and how it was transformed. Simply put, in order to understand how colonialism was transformative, we must understand what existed before.[80]

There is also the pragmatic question of reconciling a scholarly definition of history with a popular usage of the word. At a general level there is a popular engagement with the past that necessitates a "new theory of history."[81] For instance, people reenact history by dressing up and performing historical battles, then there is the enormous prevalence of historical fiction in films and novels, which represent the past in narrative form, but blur the line between fact and fiction.[82] Simply put, there needs to be a term to encompass the variety of different conventions for narrating the past and methods for its acquisition. This is pertinent given that none of the historical revisions examined in this thesis are

77 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Dipesh Chakrabarty, "In Defense of 'Provincializing Europe': A Response to Carola Dietze," *History and Theory* 1, no. 47 (2008): 85–96; Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Politics and Possibility of Historical Knowledge: Continuing the Conversation," *Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 2 (September 14, 2011): 243–50; Rochona Majumdar, *Writing Postcolonial History* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford, 1983); Ranajit Guha, *History at the Limit of World-History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

78 Shail Mayaram, *Against History, against State: Counterperspectives from the Margins* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Ajay Skaria, *Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers, and Wildness in Western India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

79 Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003); Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge*.

80 Sheldon Pollock, "Introduction," in *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500-1800*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 1–15.

81 Rüsen, *Time and History: The Variety of Cultures*, vii; Anna Clark, "Inheriting the Past: Exploring Historical Consciousness across Generations," *Historical Encounters* 1, no. 1 (June 30, 2014): 88–102.

82 Iain McCalman and Paul A Pickering, *Historical Reenactment: From Realism to the Affective Turn* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Burke, "Performing History."

composed by people who identify as historians. They are all proponents of Zoroastrianism; Parsis who use the past in order to preserve their religion and the vehicle for its propagation: the community.

Since the 1990s there has been a return to comparative historiography in order to understand the variety of historical traditions. For these scholars comparative historiography and historical consciousness are broad terms used to represent how a people narrate the past and make sense of the world. They examine the historical sensibility of one people or text, or a group of different thinkers who are understood as belonging to a tradition with certain traits. These are often collections that present a more global approach to the problem, a series of essays each expanding upon a tradition.[83] There are also studies examining Western, Islamic and Chinese historiography in isolation.[84] Then there are more philosophical approaches advancing a universal typology by which the different traditions can be compared.[85] The closest in method to the approach offered in this dissertation are two studies that compare representations of the same event or story by different peoples in different historiographical traditions.[86]

At the heart of the problem of comparative historiography and historical consciousness is a definition of history. Do we say that history is only nineteenth century German historicism? If so, how do we understand premodern European works that called themselves history? For instance, are Herodotus' *The Histories* and Thucydides' *The History of the Peloponnesian War* works of history? Does history have to be about what actually happened, and how far can it depart from facts in its retelling of events? Or do we go to other extreme and understand all story-telling set in the past as history?

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83 D. R Woolf, Andrew Feldherr, and Grant Hardy, *The Oxford History of Historical Writing* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

84 Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*; Tayeb El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography Hārūn Al-Rashīd and the Narrative of the ʿAbbasid Caliphate* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Tze-Ki Hon, *Revolution as Restoration: Guocui Xuebao and China's Path to Modernity, 1905-1911* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013); Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag, and Jörn Rüsen, *Historical Truth Historical Criticism and Ideology Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005); Viren Murthy and Axel Schneider, *The Challenge of Linear Time: Nationhood and the Politics of History in East Asia*, 2014; Michael Bentley, *Companion to Historiography* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997).

85 Jörn Rüsen, "Making Sense of Time: Towards a Universal Typology of Conceptual Foundations of Historical Consciousness," in *Time and History: The Variety of Cultures*, ed. Jörn Rüsen (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 7–18; Rüsen, *Time and History: The Variety of Cultures*; Mamadou Diawara, Bernard C Lategan, and Jörn Rüsen, *Historical Memory in Africa: Dealing with the Past, Reaching for the Future in an Intercultural Context* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Wang and Iggers, *Turning Points in Historiography*; Jörn Rüsen, *Western Historical Thinking: An Intercultural Debate* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002); Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography*.

86 N Standaert, *The Intercultural Weaving of Historical Texts: Chinese and European Stories about Emperor Ku and His Concubines* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, *Broken Narratives: Post-Cold War History and Identity in Europe and East Asia*, 2014.

On the basis of the earlier discussion, the definition of history and historical consciousness I use here will be broad but not all encompassing. History is both the past and its story; it is both a method for knowing the past and the narrative representation of what is known. This definition allows us to sidestep debates in which we privilege historical accuracy and instead refocuses our comparison on the methods and conventions. Historical consciousness is then an awareness of how the past came to be, and it is also an awareness of a method to acquire knowledge of the past and its representation in narrative form. Following from this definition, every text examined in this dissertation expresses a form of historical consciousness because they all express an awareness of method, and the conventions of their time and place. Nevertheless, this definition implies that not all narratives of the past are historical and not all humans are historically conscious. Historical consciousness has not existed throughout time; it has its own history and has emerged for different peoples at different moments due to their own peculiar circumstances. But, to be without historical thought does not mean a people are outside of history and static because I do not claim that history has a direction or historical thought is a marker of a people's development.

Historical consciousness then exists in a variety of historiographical traditions over the world and time. It was not only in Europe but in a variety of civilisations that a method emerges to know the past and conventions for its representation. In the Mughal court a tradition emerged that I will refer to as Indo-Persian. There is an Islamic historiographical tradition that emerged both to authenticate the sayings of their prophet, and also to understand their imperial expansion. I should note that these traditions are not necessarily coherent. Although I will refer to Western historical thinking, there are clearly a variety of different traditions that have existed in Europe and individual historians have their own peculiar sensibilities. For instance, a nineteenth century German science of the past is different from a British narrative historical tradition of the same period. But, these nuances do not assist our understanding of the transformation in Parsi historical thinking because Parsis did not differentiate between European historical conventions. When Parsis' revised their histories they adapted them to the broad conventions of the time and place in order to mark them as works of history.[87] Western, Islamic, Indo-Persian historiography should all be understood as shorthand for a broad set of methods and conventions that Parsi engaged with.

87 As such, I have decided against using the words historicism and historicity precisely because their meanings are both highly nuanced but also debated; their use obscures rather than clarifies.

The central question investigated in this thesis is inspired by Jörn Rüsen. He asks: "What challenges provoke historical consciousness and which demand a historiographical answer?"[88] For Rüsen the work of history, the purpose of historical narration is to make sense of contingency by giving meaning to inexplicable change.[89] New histories seek to explain events which mark a discontinuity, or a break with the current order which existing accounts could not explain.[90] Examples of discontinuities he points to are: "the French Revolution for historicism, the fall of Rome for Augustine's concept of sacred history, the new political structure and role of Athens in the late fifth century for Herodotus."[91] I modify Rüsen's question and ask:

> How can we understand the production of historical revisions, distinct forms of historical consciousness, and the similarities between these different forms?

This is a three part question that narrows our focus to understanding how the Parsi story moves through time, a comparison of different forms of historical consciousness, and a reflection on the similarities and differences between forms of historical consciousness.

In order to answer this question I have developed a toolkit of four original contributions to knowledge. My analysis is grounded in an empirical study of exemplary revisions of the Parsi story, which I discussed in chapter two. In order to understand how history is produced and revised I propose a theory of historiographical agency. I then develop a method to compare the revisions. To understand the relationship between different forms of historical consciousness I introduce a theory of restoration to historiography.

3.2 How history is revised, or a theory of historiographical agency

Historiographical agency is an interdisciplinary theory that understands the action to create each revision as a shift in power between Parsis and other communities, a shift in the society's convention for knowing and narrating the past, and a shift in the medium for both the sources of a history and the narrative itself. As a result of this three part process, each revision is something genuinely new.[92] This approach builds upon Rüsen's focus on

88 Rüsen, "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography," 16.
89 Rüsen, "Making Sense of Time: Towards a Universal Typology of Conceptual Foundations of Historical Consciousness," 7–9.
90 Rüsen, "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography," 12–13.
91 Rüsen, 17.
92 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 2002).

contingent shifts in power by adding two complementary shifts and an alternate theory of agency. I bring together the poststructuralist approach of Michel Foucault, and the postcolonial theorising of Dipesh Chakrabarty in order to analyse how each revision is constituted by and expresses various relationships between power and forms of knowledge.[93] From media studies I draw upon Walter Ong's approach to comparing media, and a theory of remediation from David Bolter and Richard Grusin to understand the revision of the story to new media.[94] In order to understand the agential force that produces historical revisions yet simultaneously recognises the individual historian, the production of knowledge, and the role of media, I borrow and develop a theory of material agency from Lambros Malafouris, which draws upon the philosophy of mind, and science and technology studies.[95] I combine this with the insights of cyborg studies to understand the agents that produce history are humans augmented by technology and ways of knowing the world.[96] Over the rest of the chapter I will expand upon these theoretical underpinnings. But first I will expand upon these three shifts that produce historical revisions of the Parsi story and distinct forms of historical consciousness.

Firstly, it is by looking at the power struggles within the community and against others that one can understand how and why a new revision comes about.[97] History is revised because existing accounts cannot guide and historically explain these new emerging relationships. Revisions are a response to an inexplicable shift. Each change in power threatens to splinter the community and the response is a revision of the persecution narrative to both unify the Parsis and guide a new relationship with other communities. We can then understand how the meaning of the encounter with Hindus changes, or in a sense, we can map the story's multivalence. The approach I propose allows us to understand that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was provoked by the Mughal conquest of Parsi lands

93 Michel Foucault, *The Order Of Things* (London: Routledge, 2002); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Foucault, *Discipline and punish*; Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2010); Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"; Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge*; Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?," *Representations*, no. 37 (1992): 1–26; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Chakrabarty, "The Politics and Possibility of Historical Knowledge: Continuing the Conversation"; Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Death of History? Historical Consciousness and the Culture of Late Capitalism," *Public Culture* 4, no. 2 (March 20, 1992): 47–65; Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*.

94 Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*; J. David Bolter, "Remediation and the Desire for Immediacy," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 6, no. 1 (March 1, 2000): 62–71; J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999); Katherine Hayles, "Print Is Flat, Code Is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis," *Poetics Today* 25, no. 1 (March 20, 2004): 67–90.

95 Knappett and Malafouris, *Material Agency*.

96 Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*; Muri, *The Enlightenment Cyborg*.

97 I understand power in the Foucauldian sense as productive.

and Akbar's post-Islamic empire. The author uses history in an attempt to negotiate a new power relationship with Hindus against Muslims that came with a new empire. Similarly, *The Parsees* was created by the challenge to British rule and revised history in order to negotiate a new power relationship with the British against Muslims and Hindus. *The Early History of the Parsees* was a response to the impending end of colonial rule and Iran's reconciliation with Zoroastrianism in order to align with Hindus by renegotiating the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* treaty with Hindus. Other historical revisions of the time sought to negotiate an alliance with Iranian Muslims. *Parsi Zoroastrians* is a response to demographic decline, postcolonialism, and then globalisation. In this way *Parsi Zoroastrians* is the fulfilment of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* vision of a post-treaty Zoroastrian community in the world. In summary, shifts in power act to produce historical revisions.

Secondly, the revisions are produced using new historiographical conventions, which have developed due to shifts in power. In every society and time, which has historical consciousness, there are conventions that mark a narrative as historical or as some other form of story-telling. For instance, in the high era of modernity for a work to be considered history it ought to be published in print, be based on corroborating sources, and tell the story of an individual or community. Shifts in power produce new conventions and a historiographical shift in how a history ought to be narrated and how the past should be acquired; that is, a new normative historiography. In turn these new conventions produce power relationships making power and knowledge mutually constitutive. Put another way, history is itself historically contingent, and the methods, conventions, and theories we use to know the past create and are in turn created by relationships of power. A history produced using older conventions is no longer historical as a result of a shift in conventions. The shift in conventions acts to revise an existing story as historical for a new era. The revision of existing stories using new conventions transforms historical consciousness. Turning to the Parsi case, we can then see the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a response to make the Parsi story historical by invoking and modifying the new Indo-Persian historiographical conventions that were developing in Akbar's court. Similarly, *The Parsees* revised the story to conform to the conventions of a nineteenth century style European ethnic-national history. In turn *The Early History* was a revision to conform to the conventions of early twentieth century positivism. Finally, *Parsi Zoroastrians* is a response to a restoration of non-traditional genres for narrating that has come with postmodernity, postcolonialism, and now globalisation.

Thirdly, the use of new media for sourcing and narrating history transforms historical consciousness. It is helpful to think about the medium because media are technologies for the transmission of information, and a historical narrative is transmitted by a medium and this narrative is also sourced from media. The medium is fundamental because the production of history is a result of the interaction between us, the technology, our conventions for marking history, and the past. Indeed, each medium creates a different narrative form and has different characteristics as a source for historical inquiry. I propose there is a close relationship between the form historical consciousness takes and the media used. In part, as each of the authors revise the story for new medium they need to adhere to its conventions, but there is more than conventions. Each medium has different capacities to transmit information about what happened in the past through time and to the future. We know the past because a medium provides us with fragments of what happened, which we then represent in narrative form. How we know the past is then linked to the characteristics of a medium, as is the narrative form. In the case of the revisions studied, each represents a transition between media for both the narrative and its sources. In the next two sections I will expand upon a general theory to understand the relationship between media and historical consciousness.[98]

3.3 The medium, remediation, and historiography

One of the central insights that we can take take from media studies is that each medium creates different modes of thinking. Revisions that represent a transition from one medium to the next can be understood by the economy forced upon on it by the new medium and by the echo of the old in the new.[99] To put it another way, the properties of the vehicle influence the form and content of the representation. We can then take this further to argue that the shift in the vehicle transforms how we know the world, it changes our capacity to know the world. A person in a culture without writing knows and understands the world differently from a person in a literate culture, different again from print, and also from Internet.[100]

98 There have been studies examining the role of individual media, such as print or the Internet, but not a general theory. Historiographical scholarship has largely underestimated how the medium transforms historical consciousness. As media studies theorists have noted, historians have not reflected upon role of the medium. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "Clio and Chronos an Essay on the Making and Breaking of History-Book Time," *History and Theory* 6 (1966): 36; Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*.

99 Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*, 21.

100 Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*; Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge University Press, 1987); Elizabeth L Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 89; Bertrand Gervais, "Is There a Text on This Screen? Reading in an Era of Hypertextuality," in *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, ed. Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd,

In order to understand how historical consciousness is transformed by a new medium, I draw upon the theory of remediation. With this theory we can understand the relationship between different media and define what a medium is. Remediation is the process of revising one medium into the content of another. In the case of the revisions studied here, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a manuscript remediation of an oral story, *The Parsees* and *The Early History* are print remediations of a manuscript, and *Parsi Zoroastrians* is a web remediation of an oral, manuscript, and print sources. We can then distinguish between different media because a medium is unique if it seeks to represent another medium as its own content.[101]

With remediation we can understand how each medium seeks to create a sense of immediacy with another medium by erasing itself. That is, a medium will seek to make itself transparent in order to represent the old medium for a viewer. The most helpful way to explain this is through a few examples. A realist painter will seek to transport the viewer into the scene they are depicting so that the viewer does not see the painting. Similarly, a film adaptation of a Shakespeare play will seek to represent a play so that the viewer feels as if they are watching a play.[102] In the case of the revisions studied here both the web *Parsi Zoroastrians* and the manuscript *Qesse-ye Sanjan* seek to create an immediacy with orality so that the reader or viewer experience how the Parsi story is told orally rather than as a website or a manuscript. What is different with the web is that it creates this sense of immediacy through hypermediacy, or by erasing itself through the use of multiple media. So in the case of *Parsi Zoroastrians*, in order to create immediacy with the oral Sugar in the Milk story, the website remediates a picture of a painting, text, and video of Parsis singing. *The Parsees* is the first print remediation of the story and seeks to recreate the feeling of a manuscript rather than a book. However, I will be complicating the theory of remediation slightly with the third revision. Although *The Early History* is a printed book, it is not at the first point of remediation and is sourced from multiple print and manuscript sources.

It is important to note that remediation does not make another medium obsolete. Writing did not lead to the end of oral storytelling, print did not lead to the end of

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2013), 183–202; Pettitt, "Media Dynamics and the Lessons of History"; The Gutenberg Parenthesis Research Forum (Institute for Literature, Media and Cultural Studies, University of Southern Denmark), "Position Paper"; The most extreme of these arguments postulates that the medium transforms the structure of our brains at a neurological level. See Katherine Hayles, *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); Katherine Hayles, "Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes," *Profession*, 2007, 187–99; Hayles, "Print Is Flat, Code Is Deep"; Nicholas G Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).

101 Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation Understanding New Media*, 65.

102 Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation Understanding New Media*.

writing, and the Internet has not led to the end of print. The process of remediation defines not only the new medium but redefines the old; there is a feedback loop. So committing an oral story to writing leads to a change on how the oral story is told and remediating a story to the web changes the form of new oral, written, and print versions. With a theory of remediation we can understand how oral, script and print do not disappear, and how the story manifests itself in different media.

3.4 Reproducibility, accessibility, and the durability of different media

In order to understand how remediation transforms historical consciousness I propose a conceptual framework in which media are differentiated by their degrees of reproducibility, accessibility, and durability. I will elaborate on each of these in turn. There is a qualitative difference in historical consciousness that is related to quantifiable differences between media. This is because history is produced out of a relationship between a medium for its narration and media for sourcing the raw material of the narrative. The work of history is to remember and transmit a collective past though time. As a result, the varying capacities of a medium to faithfully transmit information through time changes the relationship between history and human memory. In a sense, each medium has a different relationship to human memory and therefore different capacities to outsource human memory in the service of remembering the past.

Reproducibility is the degree to which a medium can duplicate exact copies of the account, it is the stability of the story and a source. In the case of orality a story can change slightly or greatly as it is retold from person to person. By comparison, with a written manuscript the story changes only slightly through the process of copying by hand. Print then offers the greatest degree of reproducibility because identical copies are easily produced. There are new and revised editions but each of these editions is identical. A website is dependent upon design choices and can be the least reproducible with each person consuming a different version or it can be highly reproducible with everyone viewing an identical one. For instance, the maintainer of a website can change the content, or in the case of user-generated content there is constant change. The content of a site can also change depending upon a user's location, and in the case of the most sophisticated sites content is selected by an algorithm and machine learning based upon an evolving profile of the individual user. Reproducibility is important for history because if a source can be identically reproduced then multiple historians can examine an identical

source that has not changed over time. If a source changes over time as it is reproduced a historian will understand the past differently compared to if the source is stable.

Accessibility is the medium's capacity to produce multiple copies of a source and as a result how widely the account can be consumed. In the case of a manuscript it is the smallest because of the difficulty of copying manuscripts by hand. Orality however has a greater degree of accessibility because it is easier to transmit a story or information by word of mouth than textual copying. Print has a greater degree because multiple copies are easily produced and distributed. The Internet has by far the largest with a capacity to reach a vast proportion of the world's population. We can see this in Google's nearly twenty year old mission statement:

> to organise the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.[103]

Again, accessibility is relevant for historical thinking because the quantity of sources available for a historian changes the method they can use to know the past.

Durability is the medium's capacity to transmit information through time to the future independent of human intervention. An oral account exists in memory and is therefore tied to the frailty of human existence because a story is only transmitted at the moment of its telling and is dependent on human memory for storage. It is an axiom of oral knowledge that what is forgotten can never be re-remembered. Manuscript and print are far more durable as they can transmit an account through time without human intervention. A written or printed story can be lost and sit in a cave for a millennia and then be found again. The web is less durable because it relies upon continual reproduction, a vast array of engineers, electricity, acceptance of protocols, large companies, and state support to continually function. Durability is important for history because our ability to know the past is dependent upon the capacity of media to transmit information from the past through time to us. History is not fiction, it is dependent upon the transmission of information through time, which we then use to create a historical narrative.

103 Google, "About Us | Google," accessed June 20, 2017, https://www.google.com/about/.

The relationships between these media and their degrees of reproducibility, consumption, and durability can be seen in the table I have created below where the quantity of Xs denote the degree.

	Oral	Manuscript	Print	Internet
Reproducibility	X	XXX	XXXX	XX
Accessibility	XX	X	XXX	XXXX
durability	X	XXXX	XXX	X

3.5 From material to historiographical agency

The problem with introducing media specific analysis into historiography is that this challenges the classical view that humans are the only agents of historical change and the influence of technologies and ideas are only through us.[104] For instance, the influential book *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* has been criticised for attributing agency to a technology rather than writers, printers, and readers.[105] In a classical view it is not then the printing press that is transformative but our use of the printing press. The problem with this approach is that is is anthropocentric and attributes to humans a sense of action in the world that we arguably do not possess.[106]

A manifestation of the problem of attributing agency is technological determinism. In this view technology acts in the world and produces certain cultural outcomes. We often do this in everyday language ascribing action to everything from the Internet, to mobile phones, and cars. An example of this type of analysis is an argument that oral history has to have certain traits as does a manuscript, a printed book, and a website. Therefore, when a people first narrate their past in a new medium it will necessarily take a specific form and necessarily one type of historical sensibility. The problem with such an approach is that the form technology takes is a result of the actions of individuals and the milieu in which it is produced. The Internet may well produce certain outcomes, but the form the Internet takes is historically and culturally specific. It developed in the context of the Cold War and military funding in America; a network of computer networks could have taken many forms.[107]

104 Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson, Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1998), 87–88; A similar but different question is the relationship between agency and structure. See Anthony Giddens, "Agency, Structure," in Central Problems in Social Theory, Contemporary Social Theory (Palgrave, London, 1979), 49–95.

105 Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*; For a discussion of this criticism see Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA, USA: Polity, 2005), 19.

106 Malafouris, "At the Potter's Wheel: An Argument for Material Agency."

107 Thomas J. Misa, "How Machines Make History, and How Historians (And Others) Help Them to Do So," *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 13, no. 3/4 (July 1, 1988): 308–31.

A theory of material agency offers a way to think through these problems.[108] In this approach humans, technology, and ideas are all viewed on the same plane. Agency is neither attributable to non-humans nor humans but rather exists in the space in between. Lambros Malafouris has a helpful way of thinking through this question by proposing a thought experiment into how a pot is created by a potter, a wheel, and clay. The potter has a sense of being an agent in control of their actions, of how they move their fingers as the wheel turns, but they do not direct the intricate movements. They have a sense of being an agent but in fact agency is in the entanglement between the potter and the wheel.[109]

Another way of approaching the problem of agency is to think of each technology, or medium, as creating a new type of augmented human. Action is then the result of the intersection of us and technology. A helpful way of understanding this solution is by exploring the analogous question is whether guns kill people or humans kill people. On the one hand, a gun on a table does not fire and kill someone, yet on the other hand, a person without any weapon will find it difficult to kill another person. We can resolve this debate by recognising that when the person and the gun come together there are new capabilities and a new entity: the gun-human. The action to kill with a gun is not then the property of human, nor is it the property of the gun, it is the meeting of the person and the technology that creates the action.[110]

Turning to the question of history we can then say that each medium augments our capacity to remember the past and transmit it through time, which creates a new form of historically aware human. There is an interplay between the medium as vehicle to remember the past and our own memories. This is because media have different degrees of accessibility, reproducibility, and durability, thus different capacities to transmit the past through time. We can outsource our memory to a medium and thereby change the way in which we process information. For instance, with orality we rely upon on own memories to transmit the past, by contrast with script we do not need to rely on our own memories to the same degree, and even less so with print. With the web and our permanently

108 This is a variant of actor-network theory.

109 Malafouris, "At the Potter's Wheel: An Argument for Material Agency."

110 I would like to thank Michael Arnold for suggesting this way of thinking about the hybrid human. For further reading on material agency see Knappett and Malafouris, *Material Agency*; Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005); Allen and others, "The Materiality of Knowledge Production"; Gabrielle Durepos and Albert J. Mills, "Actor-Network Theory, ANTi-History and Critical Organizational Historiography," *Organization* 19, no. 6 (November 1, 2012): 703–21; Lambros Malafouris, *How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement*, 2016; John Robb, *The Early Mediterranean Village: Agency, Material Culture, and Social Change in Neolithic Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2016); Misa, "How Machines Make History, and How Historians (And Others) Help Them to Do So"; Robert L. Heilbroner, "Do Machines Make History?," *Technology and Culture* 8, no. 3 (July 1, 1967): 335–45.

Internet connected attached devices such as phones we augment a large amount of memory work. This is a form of augmentation far more extreme that the other media because we not only outsource our memories, but locating ourselves both physically and temporally in the world, managing our social relationships, and monitoring our bodies. As a result we have already become cyborgs, or the cybernetic organisms of science fiction's past.[111] I propose we can then characterise these differently augmented historians as the oral-history-human, the manuscript-history-human, the print-history-human, and the web-history-human.

Historiographical agency is then the augmented historian who produces a historical narrative, and exists at the intersection of shifts in the space between an author, shifting conventions for history, the medium for narrating and sourcing the narrative, and contingent shifts in power. Put another way, the agent that produces historical revisions and new forms of historical consciousness is not an individual person, but the space in between the historian, the medium, shifts in power, and our ideas. Only by examining these three aspects can we fully appreciate how history is retold.

3.6 A comparative method

The second part of the question that drives this thesis is how we understand the relationship between different forms of historical consciousness. In order to answer this question I have developed a method for comparative historiography. Each of the revisions are exemplary forms of historical consciousness for their time and place and offer us a window into the historical thinking of the time.

The method I advance to compare different forms of historical consciousness is inspired by Rüsen. I develop approaches he outlines in an article titled "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography."[112] For Rüsen the problem is how to compare traditions yet avoid ethnocentrism. He proposes that "every comparison needs an organizing parameter" and suggests that one seek the "anthropological

111 I build upon the scholarship of Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*; Muri, *The Enlightenment Cyborg*; Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century"; Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*; James A. Inman, *Computers and Writing: The Cyborg Era* (Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004); Peter-Paul Verbeek, "Cyborg Intentionality: Rethinking the Phenomenology of Human–Technology Relations," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 7, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 387–95; The cyborg of cyberpunk can be seen in Gibson, *Neuromancer*; Oshii, *Ghost in the Shell*; Gene Roddenberry et al., *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Home Entertainment, 2011); Lucas, *Star Wars*.

112 Rüsen, "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography"; He develops this further in Rüsen, "Making Sense of Time: Towards a Universal Typology of Conceptual Foundations of Historical Consciousness."

universals" by asking a series of questions that apply to all traditions.[113] Rüsen's approach is appealing because it moves beyond positing one tradition as the standard against which others are compared.

Following Rusen's injunction I develop my own method for comparative historiography in which I examine how exemplary revisions of the Parsi story build upon and refute prior historical sensibilities. Each revision expresses a different form of historical consciousness, and the similarities and differences between each manifestation generate points of reflection. Parsi history-telling is a compelling case-study because they have narrated versions of the same story for over 400 years in a variety of different historiographical traditions. The value of such a method is to reduce cross-cultural variables by comparing the same peoples' historical sensibility and its changes over time. I compare historiographical attributes that are common to the revisions to avoid privileging the manifestations of one tradition, or placing one tradition as the standard against which others are judged.[114]

My method is interdisciplinary because the examination of revisions produced over a 415-year period requires an extensive toolkit. The contemporary Parzor project's website is understood through an anthropological method of interviews and ten months of fieldwork in India.[115] The colonial era histories are read using a modern historical method, which understands the revisions contextually using the wealth of primary print sources. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* poses a challenge due to the dearth of contemporary sources.

113 Rüsen, "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography," 6–8.

114 Following the suggestion of Rüsen. See Rüsen, "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography."

115 My ethnographic approach has been informed by readings of Assa Doron, "Ferrying the Gods: Myth, Performance and the Question of 'Invented Traditions' in the City of Banaras," *Sites: A Journal of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1 (September 24, 2009): 58–79; Assa Doron, *Life on the Ganga: Boatmen and the Ritual Economy of Banaras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Debjani Ganguly, *Caste, Colonialism and Counter-Modernity: Notes on a Postcolonial Hermeneutics of Caste* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005); Kirin Narayan, *Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Kirin Narayan, "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?," *American Anthropologist* 95, no. 3 (September 1, 1993): 671–86; Barbara Tedlock, "From Participant Observation to the Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 47, no. 1 (April 1, 1991): 69–94; Bernard S Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Fern Ingersoll and Jasper Ingersoll, "Both A Borrower and A Lender Be: Ethnography, Oral History, and Grounded Theory," *The Oral History Review* 15, no. 1 (April 1, 1987): 81–102; Antonius C. G. M Robben and Jeffrey A. Sluka, *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*, vol. 9 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007); Caroline B. Brettell, *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography* (Bergin & Garvey, 1996); Ingersoll and Ingersoll, "Both A Borrower and A Lender Be: Ethnography, Oral History, and Grounded Theory"; Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus* 101, no. 1 (January 1, 1972): 1–37; Brettell, *When They Read What We Write*; Martin Thomas, "Taking Them Back: Archival Media in Arnhem Land Today," *Cultural Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2007): 20–37; Irfan Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India: The Transformation of Jamaat-e-Islami* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009); The idea of the cyborg by my reading of Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*. The cyborg will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

As such I read it comparatively with other histories produced at the time using a literary method that focus on narrative form.[116]

In order to compare different forms of historical consciousness we need to abstract the revisions into a framework that allows comparison. I propose a series of narrative and historiographical categories, which allow me to classify the revisions using attributes that they all share. This approach builds upon the insights of literary studies, in which the narrative form is compared, while also drawing from historiographical theory an approach that foregrounds the method by which the past is known. Therefore I compare the following narrative categories and state the attributes of each revision:

1. Narrative medium – orality, manuscript, print, or the web.
2. Language – Persian or English.
3. Form – Verse, prose, or prose, image, and video.
4. Length of text – short, medium, or long.
5. Narrative structure – chronological or thematic.
6. Subject – either a Zoroastrian king or the Parsis as an ethnic community.

I also also compare the following historiographical categories:

1. Source media – The media that the author sources the material on which they base their narrative. In the case of the revisions studied these are oral traditions, contemporary practices, manuscripts, and various printed and archaeological sources.
2. Locating events and people in time – Each revision seeks to historically locate the narrated events relative to each other or in a universal calendar.
3. Audience — The audiences can be either in the present or in the future, a Parsi priest or the community in general, the British, or the world.
4. Allegorical representation – Each revision allegorically either represents the present in the past, or the past in the past.
5. Distance — The revisions create different senses, or perceptions of distance for the reader that are close or distant. This is sometimes called distantiation or how far away the past feels and the sense of difference or strangeness from the reader's

116 Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*; Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*.

present day experience.[117] I am not referring here to a person's perception of the speed of time. For instance, it has been argued that today there is a greater sense of speed, or a condensing of time.[118]

6. Change over time – Each revision also seek to explain change over time as either divinely preordained or the result of causation due to the actions of people.
7. Focus – memorability or factuality.
8. Purpose of history – didactic or knowing the past.
9. Historical structure – three part cyclical, stadial, inverted stadial, and no stages.
10. Authorial authority — The authors seek to establish their authority to narrate history using different conventions and methods for acquiring the raw material of their narratives. These are variously the priesthood, corroboration by scholars, corroboration by empirical method, or sublime story-telling.

Combined we can abstract and understand the sensibility of each revision as expressing a different temporal configurations. Each revision expresses a relationship between past, present, and future, or different senses of time and representations of eras of time. They all tell a story based in the past but that story can be a representation of the present in the past or it can seek to represent the past in the past.

3.7 The Gutenberg parenthesis, augmented orality, and the restoration of preprint historical consciousness

As I was comparing the revisions I noticed a similarity in the historical sensibility between the most recent web based version and the first script revision. Given that I was understanding the revisions as reflective of the historical consciousness of their periods, I needed a broader theoretical framework to understand the relationship between the periods. Periodisation, or how we conceptualise different epochs and their relationship to one another, is a central problem for historical theory.[119] Rüsen suggests a periodisation of historical thinking in which the medium of orality is prehistoric, scribality and print are

117 Bain Attwood, "In the Age of Testimony: The Stolen Generations Narrative, 'Distance' and Public History," *Public Culture* 20, no. 1 (2008); Anthony Kemp, *The Estrangement of the Past: A Study in the Origins of Modern Historical Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

118 Robert Hassan, "Network Time and the New Knowledge Epoch," *Time & Society* 12, no. 2–3 (September 1, 2003): 225–41; Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Judy Wajcman, *Pressed for Time: The Acceleration of Life in Digital Capitalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

119 Helge Jordheim, "Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities," *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (2012): 151–171.

historic, and electronicality is post-historic.[120] However, as I will show in the case of the Parsis, a linear model of periodisation does not fully capture this relationship. Rather, what we see happening today is the restoration of a sensibility similar to orality.

My reflection about this relationship draws upon the work of key media studies theorists who argue electronic media are restoring modes of cognition that existed prior to the development of the printing press. In a theory of restoration I found a way of thinking about periodisation that is linked to the medium.[121] These theories have been termed as a "restoration topos"[122] by a Thomas Pettitt, a scholar in the Gutenberg Parenthesis Research Forum.[123] He has identified four permutations of the theory. The first is Marshall McLuhan's who argued that the electronic era of radio and television shares similarities with preprint manuscript culture.[124] The second is that cognition of preliterate orality is similar to radio and television, and they are separated by an era of literacy. This is the position of Walter Ong who terms the former as primary orality and the latter as secondary orality.[125] Both of these formulations were developed prior to the web. The third permutation updates Ong's argument to postulate a similarity between the Internet and orality. John Foley, an exponent of this position, argues that orality and the Internet are similar because their production is a constant process rather than fixity of a page or book. Even more radically it is argued that the Internet and orality are akin to our cognitive process insofar as they are all pathways through a network.[126] The Gutenberg Parenthesis Research Forum presents the fourth permutation, which updates McLuhan's argument for the era of the Internet: its proponents argue that there are modes of cognition produced by print and this era has now ended. The Gutenberg Parenthesis corresponds roughly to the period from the year 1500 to 2000; or from the start of movable print type in Europe to the widespread use of the Internet. The era of print is enclosed by a parenthesis because the modes of cognition that we are starting to witness resemble those exhibited in the preprint era of manuscripts and large scale illiteracy. The dynamics of cognition either side of the parenthesis "saw creativity as a re-forming, by memory and imagination, of what was available."[127] Provocatively Pettitt argues:

120 Rüsen, "Some Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Comparative Historiography," 18; Jörn Rüsen and Pieter Duvenage, *Studies in Metahistory* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1993).
121 A theory of restoration has not been used to understand different forms of historical consciousness.
122 Pettitt, "Media Dynamics and the Lessons of History."
123 The Gutenberg Parenthesis Research Forum (Institute for Literature, Media and Cultural Studies, University of Southern Denmark), "Position Paper."
124 McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*.
125 Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*.
126 Foley, *Oral Tradition and the Internet Pathways of the Mind*, 5; John Miles Foley, "Home Page in Pathways Project," accessed February 9, 2016, http://pathwaysproject.org/.

> the Internet will ultimately make us think the way medieval peasants thought, or Google is making us stupid in a more medieval rustic sort of way.[128]

I will be arguing for a more limited specific version of the third position: today's web-history-history is restoring the historical sensibility of the oral-human at the point of transition to the script-history-human.

I reformulate Ong's conception of primary and secondary orality in the light of my approach, which foregrounds the role of augmentation, to understand the restoration as a form of augmented orality. This formulation is helpful because we can understand that it is a mode of cognition similar to orality, but this type of thinking comes about due to a radical augmentation of our memory.

What I find conceptually helpful is the metaphor of the parenthesis enclosing script and print. If we imagine the process of reading a sentence in which there is some text in the middle enclosed by a parenthesis, on entering the parenthesis we travel on a momentary tangent that ends with the closing bracket. What is read within the parenthesis is not forgotten because that knowledge is still there, but the sentence has returned to its previous trajectory. In the same way historical consciousness is fluid and unstable prior to writing, becoming more fixed with writing and even more so with print, and with the web it becomes fluid and unstable again but with a memory and awareness of prior greater stability. Restoration is not the elimination of print created order, rather it is enclosed and subsumed. For historical consciousness we can represent these differently augmented historians parenthetically as:

oral-history-human { manuscript-history-human { print-history-human } } internet-history-human

By bringing together the theories of remediation, material agency, my framework for comparing media, a restoration argument, and historical consciousness, I make three main claims:

1. The web is creating a historically aware human that is radically different from print.

127 The Gutenberg Parenthesis Research Forum (Institute for Literature, Media and Cultural Studies, University of Southern Denmark), "Position Paper."

128 Thomas Pettitt, "The Gutenberg Parenthesis -- Oral Tradition and Digital Technologies (MIT Communications Forum)," MIT TechTV, accessed January 25, 2016, https://techtv.mit.edu/videos/16645-the-gutenberg-parenthesis-oral-tradition-and-digital-technologies.

2. The degree of difference between the internet-history-human and the print-history-human is greater than the manuscript-history-human to the print-history-human.
3. The internet-history-human is strikingly similar to the oral-history-human.

In order to support my formulation of the restoration, I will compare the revisions using the narrative and historiographical categories outlined in the previous section. It is the combination of these aspects that allow us to recognise the restoration of historical consciousness. Over the course of the next thirteen chapters I will argue that the four revisions can each be represented using the following formulations:

The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a representation of the present in the past for the future.

The Parsees is a representation of the present in the past for the present.

The Early History is a representation of the past in the past for the present.

Parsi Zoroastrians is a representation of the present in the past for the future.

Thus, the revisions of the Parsi story can be represented parenthetically as:

Qesse-ye Sanjan { *The Parsees* { *The Early History* } } *Parsi Zoroastrians*

I will now briefly detail how I developed these formulations.

The 1599 *Qesse-ye Sanjan* manuscript allegorically represents contemporary Parsi life in the remembered past in order to guide a future Parsi priestly audience. History as a guide is the echo of an oral sensibility in which the purpose of history was to encapsulate the past in a memorable story. A future audience is a result of the remediation to a more durable medium, which creates a heritage sensibility to save the past for the future. Bahman establishes his authorial authority from a Zoroastrian oral tradition for the transmission of knowledge, and he narrates a history of Zoroastrian kings as a future status claim for his branch of the priesthood. In the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* we can see both the oral-history-human and the script-history-human because it is the first remediation to script.

By contrast, *The Parsees* is an allegorical representation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* vision Parsi life in a historical past for a contemporary British audience in 1858. Importantly, because the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a mirror of Parsi life in 1599, *The Parsees* is then representing this mirror's snapshot as if it were all of Parsi history. Critical to this representation is print's augmentation of memory, which shifts the purpose of history from being a guide to an inquiry into and knowing the past. This representation is made possible by the

capacity of print to create a sense of historical distance by immersing a contemporary audience in the past.

Different again is *The Early History*, which is a classic work of modern print history insofar as it is an inquiry to know the past using multiple sources in order to represent what is known in the past. Print had augmented memory to such a degree that the story no longer needed be memorable in order to transmit the past and the purpose of history became a debate over factuality.

We can see the restoration of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* historical consciousness in the 2014 web history: *Parsi Zoroastrians*. However, these similar sensibilities come about for different reasons. *Parsi Zoroastrians* uses the past as a guide due to shifts in historiographical conventions and a focus on making the story memorable. The focus on a memorable story is because we outsource our memory to the web, which absolves us from the need to remember raw information; we remember a story and its meaning rather than the facts of what happened. History is then marked by a heritage impulse to save the past for a future audience in which Parsis no longer exist.

4. The 1599 *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and Akbar's post-Islamic empire

A history of Parsi history-telling begins with their oldest extant history, a Persian language poem composed by a priest named Bahman Kay Qobad Sanjana in 1599 in the Gujarati town of Navsari.[129] Bahman did not give it a title but it has come to be known as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, or the Story of Sanjan. The poem tells a story of the rise and fall of Zoroastrian dynasties in Iran and their continuation in India in the form of a sacred fire. This fire is known as the Iranshah, or the king of Iran, and Bahman's branch of the priesthood is its custodian to this day.[130] According to the poem the fire was consecrated in Sanjan on arrival in India as part of a treaty for asylum with a Hindu king. It is important to note that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* does not narrate this encounter using the sugar and milk metaphor, which is central to the revision that began this thesis. Instead the poem narrates an encounter in which the king grants asylum on the condition that Parsis profess loyalty and acculturate a number of Hindu practices. The Hindu king fulfils his part of the treaty immediately by allowing the establishment of the Iranshah fire. With the Iranshah a Zoroastrian king of Iran has a home in India.[131] Later in the poem the Parsis fulfil this treaty by defending a Hindu kingdom against an invasion by Muslims.

The poem is used as a source for almost all later accounts of Parsi history. While the poem's existence is well-known amongst Parsis today, few have read the English or Gujarati translation of the original text and even fewer have read the original Persian version. Today it is largely known by Parsis in the form of an oral revision which is narrated amongst themselves and to non-Parsis. Pointedly, Parsis have engaged in bitter disputes over whether the poem is a work of fiction or history. The author states that his story is based upon an oral account passed down through generations of priests. In turn the poem's manuscript has been passed down to the present day through generations of Parsi priests as part of a tradition of manuscript copying. Today a number of slightly different copies exist.[132]

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129 The years of his birth and death are unknown although Bahman was probably young at the time of its composition. For a discussion of the author see Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 2–5.

130 Although in Iran from the 15th century Zoroastrian priests referred to the highest grade of fire temple as the Iranshah. Citing the argument of Mary Boyce in Williams, 186.

131 Williams, 186–87.

132 For a discussion of the manuscripts see Williams, 11–14 .Williams' translation was chosen as it is the most scholarly. For other translations see ; Eduljee, *Kisseh-i Sanjan*; Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*; Rustom Barjorji Paymaster, ed., *Kisse-i-Sanjan* (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1915); Asiatic Society of Bombay, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, vol. 1 (Asiatic Society of Bombay, 1870), 167–90.

The production of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is seemingly perplexing for two reasons. Firstly because it manifests a hostility towards Muslims yet was composed during the reign of a Muslim who was enamoured with Zoroastrian Iran and who is widely celebrated in contemporary India for his pluralism. Secondly, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is the Parsis first written history but Parsis were literate prior to the late sixteenth century, and we can surmise that they possessed historical narratives because the poem is a revision of an oral source that we do not have access.[133] It is perplexing that no one transcribed their history even though priests had for centuries engaged in a vibrant production of written documents, and possessed histories from Iran such as the eleventh century national epic the *Shahnama.*[134] Why was their first written history composed in the late sixteenth century, and what form of historical consciousness did it express?

In this chapter I argue there was a shift in power relationships with Emperor Akbar's conquests of late sixteenth century Gujarat. The poem sought to historically explain an alternative to Akbar's post-Islamic empire, which began with Akbar's seeming abandonment of Islam in favour of his own religion that fused aspects of Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Hinduism. This was a disruption to the existing power relationship in which Parsis and Hindus were subordinate to Muslims. One branch of the Parsi

133 We can gather that there are none because Parsi scholars have spent more than a century searching for alternate sources to corroborate the historical accuracy of poem's account. Williams says "they have no other account of their origins" Williams, The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora, 6; For examples of Parsi histories that have sought to corroborate the Qesse-ye Sanjansee Modi, Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.; Hodivala, Studies in Parsi History; Modi, A Few Events in the Early History of the Parsis and Their Dates; Modi, Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.; B Bhathena, Kisse-Sanjan. A Palpable Falsehood. (Bombay: n.p., 1944); Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat.

134 There was a priestly tradition of copying and sometimes translating ancient Iranian Zoroastrian texts. For instance see Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala, Neryosangh's Sanskrit Version of Yasna XIX ... (Oxford); Neryosang Dhaval, The Book of the Mainyo-I-Khard: The Pazand and Sanskrit Texts, as Arranged by Neriosengh Dhaval, with an English Translation and Glossary by E. W. West, trans. E. W. West (London: Messrs. Trubner and Co., 1871); Over the course of the sixteenth century they produced at least 400 documents. See Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat, 49; From 1478 Parsis inaugurated a written correspondence with their Zoroastrian brethren in Iran which continued for three centuries. See Mario Vitalone, The Persian Revayats : A Bibliographic Reconnaissance / Mario Vitalone (Napoli : Istituto universitario orientale, Dipartimento di studi asiatici, 1987); Mario Vitalone, The Persian Revayat Ithoter : Zoroastrian Rituals in the Eighteenth Century (Napoli: Istituto universitario orientale, 1996); Ervad Bamanji Nusserwanji Dhabhar, The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others: Their Version with Introduction and Notes (Mumbai: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1999); Ferdowsi, The Epic of the Kings: Shah-Nama the National Epic of Persia (London: Arkana, 1990); We can gather Bahman knew the Shahnama due to the stylistic similarities with the Qesse-ye Sanjanand even the borrowing of text. See Williams, The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora, 14–17; Parsis also knew the thirteenth century Zartoshtnama, the story of Zarathustra. See Williams, 13–14; Sheffield, "In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India," 43–83; Also well-known is a Zoroastrian account of creation which was probably composed towards the end of the Sasanian, or the last Zoroastrian empire. See D. Neil MacKenzie, "BUNDAHIŠN," in Encyclopædia Iranica, vol. IV (London, 1990), 547–51, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bundahisn-primal-creation.

priesthood was close to the syncretism of Akbar's court but the author's branch was not. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* uses the past to guide Parsis by warning them of the perils posed by Muslims and offers an alternative vision of an alliance with Hindus trading asylum for loyalty and acculturation.

In the next chapter I propose that a new type of historian was created who was augmented by these shifting power relationships, new historical conventions that developed in Akbar's court, and the remediation of an oral story to script. I term this agent the script-history-human. The result was a poem that represented contemporary power challenges onto a remembered oral tradition in order to mark this tradition as historical by revising the story to script. Significantly, the augmentation with script created an audience in the future yet at the same time a sense of immediacy was created with the oral tradition. As such we can see aspects of both a script-history-human and an oral-history-human in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. We can summarise the poem's historical consciousness as a representation of the present in the past for the future.

Throughout these two chapters I will draw upon Alan Williams' reading and translation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, the scholarship on the Mughal Emperor Akbar who ruled Navsari at the time, and primary sources from Akbar's court. Williams' translation and analysis of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* addresses the nearly two century old debate as to whether the poem is a work of history or a myth. He persuasively argues against the contemporary Parsi position that the poem is a work of history and instead understands it as a myth that guided Parsis in the early 17th century. In his estimation the poem is a mirror of contemporary 17th century Parsi practices rather than a clock record of how they came to be in India.[135]

Before beginning it is worthwhile placing the poem in a broader context. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a window into the world before it was transformed by maritime trade and the global conquest of the corporation. This was a time when an Indian empire was ascendant and Europeans marvelled at its grandeur and wealth. There was no sense of how the world, India, and Parsi life were about to be transformed. Thus, we can reflect upon a number of contemporary and scholarly debates about the relationship between different religious communities in India prior to colonisation, the nature of premodern Muslim empires and their historical thinking, and how a refugee story is narrated between non-Europeans prior to modernity.[136]

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135 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*.

136 Christopher Alan Bayly, "The Pre-History of '; Communalism'? Religious Conflict in India, 1700–1860," *Modern Asian Studies* 19, no. 02 (1985): 177–203; Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in*

4.1 Akbar's liberation of Parsis and Hindus

In order to understand how this poem came to be we must first tell the story of Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) who conquered Navsari and Gujarat twenty-six years prior to the poem composition.[137] He is the most famous and third in a Muslim dynasty that came to be known as the Mughals.[138] Akbar's grandfather came from what is now modern day Uzbekistan to defeat an Afghan dynasty that ruled Delhi and parts of Northern India in 1526.[139] Although Akbar was the third in the Mughal dynasty, in many respects he marks the beginning of the empire.[140] His rule began when he was 12 years old and lasted until his death nearly half a century later during which time Mughal rule extended over much of what is modern Northern India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.[141] There was a flowering of writing, Indian statecraft, painting, music, and most importantly for this thesis, historical writing.[142] He was known as Padshah, or the king of kings.[143] A painting of Akbar's entry to Surat following his conquest is pictured in illustration one.

Colonial North India (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Michael Gottlob, "Communalism, Nationalism, Secularism: Historical Thinking in India and the Problem of Cultural Diversity," in *Time and History: The Variety of Cultures*, ed. Jörn Rüsen (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 179–99; Nandy, "History's Forgotten Doubles"; Christophe Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism a Reader* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge University Press, 2008); The Mughal empire is often referred to as early modern. But I think it more helpful to think about modernity as a state of mind in which the world is divided into modern and traditional. In which case the Mughals were not modern. For a discussion of modernity see Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Muddle of Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (2011): 663–75.

137 Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 40–63; Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, 1957, 2:1; That Navsari was under the economic sphere and political jurisdiction of Surat is attested to by eht Dutchman Broeke Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, 80; Abu al-Fazal ibn Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, trans. H. S. Jarrett, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1891), 257; It should be noted that they did not call themselves Mughal see Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2004).

138 Mughal is a Persian corruption of Mongol.

139 Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, 3,18.

140 André Wink, *Akbar* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 1.

141 John F Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 32–34.

142 For an introduction to Mughal India see Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Mughal State, 1526-1750* (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Abolghasem Dadvar, *Iranians in Mughal Politics and Society, 1606-1658* (New Delhi: Gyan Pub. House, 1999); William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London: HarperCollins, 2002); Alain DesouliÈres, "Mughal Diplomacy in Gujarat (1533–1534) in Correia's 'Lendas Da India,'" *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 03 (1988): 433–54; Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal World: Life in India's Last Golden Age* (New Delhi; New York, New York: Penguin Books, 2007); Michelguglielmo Torri, "Trapped inside the Colonial Order: The Hindu Bankers of Surat and Their Business World during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 2 (May 1, 1991): 367–401; Michelguglielmo Torri, "Surat during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century: What Kind of Social Order? A Rejoinder to Lakshmi Subramanian," *Modern Asian Studies* 21, no. 4 (January 1, 1987): 679–710; Irfan Habib, *Akbar and His India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

143 Wink, *Akbar*, 16.

Illustration 1: Farrokh Beg, *Akbar's triumphal entry into Surat, 1572*, painting, 1590-5, in Akbar-nama, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1572-Akbars_triumphal_entry_into_Surat.jpg

The port of Surat was significant for the Mughal Empire for trade and pilgrimage to Mecca, and it is significant for understanding the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* because Navsari lies 20km from Surat and 85km from Sanjan.[144] Although Parsis had spread out over Gujarat at the time of the poem's composition, Navsari was the then centre of Parsi life, in part due to the presence of the Iranshah. A variety of sources suggest that the community has had a continuous presence since at least 1142CE and probably since 922CE. Indeed it may have been founded by Parsis although the evidence is disputed.[145] We can ascertain that there were Parsi land owners, craftsmen manufacturing textiles and boats, to perfumed oils, and the local liquor named toddy.[146]

In order to support my argument that Akbar's rule was transformative for the Parsis' power relationship with other communities, I must first establish the oppression that existed prior to his rule. Akbar's conquest freed the Parsis of Navsari and Surat from the chaotic and often oppressive rule of the Islamic sultanate, which had previously governed the region. In the decades prior to his conquest southern Gujarat witnessed a succession of rulers. In 1583-4 warring factions within the sultanate repeatedly looted a wealthy trading town with a considerable Parsi population.[147] Adding to the instability was the sacking of Surat by the Portuguese in 1529-30 and their state sponsored piracy.[148] In 1611 a Mughal historian wrote of the sultanate:

> The laws and precepts of Islam were so strongly enforced in the time of this Sultan that no Hindu could ride on horseback in the city. The dress of a Hindu was not complete without his binding a piece of red cloth round his sleeve. Hindu usages and customs, like the obscene rites of the Huh, the evil ceremonies of the Divali, and the worship of idols could not be practised openly.[149]

144 Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*; Michelguglielmo Torri, "Mughal Nobles, Indian Merchants and the Beginning of British Conquest in Western India: The Case of Surat 1756-1759," *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (May 1, 1998): 257–315.

145 Desai, *History of the Parsis of Navsari*; Sorabji Mancheji Desai, *Tawarikh Navsari* (Baroda: The Luhanna Mithra, 1887).

146 Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*, 189–253; John Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617, Describing His Experiences in Arabia, India, and the Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster, vol. 16, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society 2 (Cambridge: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1905), 128; Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, 1891; Lotika Varadarajan, *Gujarat and the Sea* (Darshak Itihas Nidhi, 2011), 155.

147 Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 119–20; Another secondary source that recounts the persecution is Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, 1938, 1:144.

148 Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, 8.

149 Sikandar ibn Muhammad and Faridi Fazl Ullah Lutf Ullah, *Mirati Sikandari; or, The Mirror of Sikandar* (Bombay: Printed at the Education Society's Press, 1899), 239; Dale writes that this is based upon six

Akbar restored Hindu landholdings which had previously been confiscated.[150] His chief minister, friend, and court historian, Abul-Fazl ibn Mubarak (1551-1602), wrote that Akbar

> determined upon the conquest of Gujrat, and the amendment of the distractions of that country, for the oppression of the subjects thereof had reached its climax.[151]

Furthermore, Abul-Fazl states that Parsis were free to practice their religion under Akbar's rule, writing:

> The followers of Zoroaster coming from Persia, settled here. They follow the teaching of the Zend and the Pazend, and erect funeral structures. Thus, through the wide tolerance of His Majesty every sect enjoys freedom.[152]

From these quotes we can see that Akbar's conquest was a transformation in the existing power relationships between Parsis, Hindus, and Muslims.

4.2 The end of the Islamic era and the promulgation of an Indo-Persian empire

Akbar's rule was a liberation due to a shift in his religious belief that accompanied a growing hostility to Islam, which occurred shortly after his conquest of Gujarat.[153] In contemporary sources this shift began in 1576 when Akbar inaugurated a series of religious debates at a purpose built hall.[154] Initially these religious debates included only Sunnis before being opened to representatives of other religions including a Parsi priest from Navsari along with Jains, Hindus, Hindu materialists or atheists, Shia Muslims, and Catholics from Portugal.[155] A painting of the court of religions is shown in illustration two.

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earlier Mughal histories that are now lost. Stephen F. Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. C. P Melville and Ehsan Yarshater (London: I.B.Tauris, 2012), 608.

150 Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, 1938, 1:119.

151 Abu al-Fazal ibn Mubarak, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1907), 537.

152 The "here" he is referring to is Rainer, a town on the other side of the river from Surat. Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, 1891, 2:243.

153 For an account of this shift away from Islam see Wink, *Akbar*, 88–92.

154 This was called Ibadat Khana, or prayer house in Akbar's custom built capital Fatehpur Sikri just south of Delhi.

155 For a discussion of the atheist philosophy presented see Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski, "East-West Swerves: Cārvāka Materialism and Akbar's Religious Debates at Fatehpur Sikri," *Genre* 48, no. 2 (July 1, 2015): 131–57; For a study of Jains at Akbar's court see Pushpa Prasad, "Akbar and the Jains," in *Akbar and His India*, ed. Irfan Habib (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 97–108.

Illustration 2: Nar Singh, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, painting, 1605, in Akbar-nama, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jesuits_at_Akbar%27s_court.jpg

The shifts in Akbar's belief can be corroborated by three contemporary sources whose author's were of different religions and held different positions on Akbar's reforms. The unanimity of these authors' descriptions of his religious shift support that it was a radical deviation from Islam as it had been practised. Writing in support of Akbar was Abul-Fazl who celebrated his divine rule and dynasty in its official history titled *Akbarnama*, which detailed the workings of the empire and legitimised his rule.[156] Abul-Fazl reports a saying of Akbar that suggests he was an apostate:

> Formerly I persecuted men into conformity with my faith and deemed it Islam. As I grew in knowledge, I was over-whelmed with shame. Not being a Muslim myself, it was unmeet to force others to become such. What constancy is to be expected from proselytes on compulsion?[157]

Abul-Fazl's adversary in Akbar's court was the orthodox Sunni courtier Abd-al-Qadir Ibn-Muluk Sah al-Badauni (1540-1615) for whom Akbar's reforms were a heresy.[158] Following Akbar's death Badauni published a three volume history of Muslims in India that was highly critical of his reign.[159] Similarly he suggests Akbar was an apostate writing of these debates:

> Religion was broken down, so that after five or six years not a trace of Islam was left in him…And the Resurrection, and Judgment, and other details and traditions, of which the Prophet was the repository, he laid all aside...The prayers of Islam, the fast, nay even the pilgrimage, were henceforth forbidden...Reading and learning Arabic was looked upon as a crime[160]

156 Abu al-Fazal ibn Mubarak, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1907); Mubarak, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, 1907; Abu al-Fazal ibn Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, trans. M. A. Blochmann, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1872); Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, 1891; Abu al-Fazal ibn Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, trans. H. S. Jarrett, vol. 3 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1947); Shireen Moosvi, "Making and Recording History — Akbar and The Akbar-Nama," in *Akbar and His Age*, ed. Iqtidar Alam Khan (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1999) For an introduction to the Akbarnama see ; Harbans Mukhia, *Historians and Historiography during the Reign of Akbar* (New Delhi: Vikas Pub. House, 1976), 48; Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography."

157 Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, 1947, 3:429.

158 A. S. Bazmee Ansari, "BADĀ'ŪNĪ, ʿABD-AL-QĀDER," in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. III (London, 1989), 364–65, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/badauni-abd-al-qader-b.

159 ʻAbd-al-Qādir Ibn-Mulūk Šāh al-Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, trans. George S. A. Rank, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1898); ʻAbd-al-Qādir Ibn-Mulūk Šāh al-Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1924); ʻAbd-al-Qādir Ibn-Mulūk Šāh al-Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, vol. 3 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1925).

160 Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1924, 2:255,257,306,306-7.

Furthermore, a Jesuit missionary who engaged in these religious discussions in the hope of converting Akbar also suggests he was an apostate writing:

> [Akbar] even declared that he was no Musalman, and attributed no value to the creed of Muhammad, saying that he was a follower of the sect which calls upon one God alone without a rival.[161]

Scholars have proposed that Akbar promulgated a new syncretic imperial religion, which justified his rule.[162] This religion combined elements from Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Sufism. The emperor portrayed himself as semi-divine playing upon the ambiguity of the Islamic phrase Allah akbar which could mean both god is great and Akbar is god.[163]

The perception of a new era was heightened with the development of a number of millenarian movements. Islam's thousandth year fell in the later part of Akbar's reign and the emperor commissioned a millennial history of Islam that was dated from Muhammad's death rather than his flight from Mecca to Medina to escape persecution.[164] There were a variety of millenarian movements and one took hold in Gujarat that had previously been suppressed under the Gujarati sultanate.[165] In the decades leading up to this date there were many, including Akbar, who believed the era of Islam was coming to an end. Badauni writes:

> in his Majesty's opinion, it was a settled fact, that the 1000 years since the time of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which was to be the period of the continuance of the faith of Islam, were now completed, no hindrance remained to the promulgation of those, secret designs which he nursed in his heart...he felt at liberty to embark fearlessly on his design of annulling the statutes and ordinances of Islam, and of establishing his own cherished pernicious belief.[166]

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161 Anthony Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J., on His Journey to the Court of Akbar.*, trans. J. S Hoyland (London: Milford, 1922), 173.

162 This religion was called Din-i Ilahi which is variously translated as the Religion of God or Divine Faith. For a study of the changing interpretation of Akbar and his religion see Satish Chandra, *State, Society, and Culture in Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012); Wink, *Akbar*, 97–107; Vincent Arthur Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul, 1542-1605* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917); M. Athar Ali, "The Evolution of the Perception of India: Akbar and Abu'l Fazl," *Social Scientist* 24, no. 1/3 (January 1996): 80; Iqtidar Alam Khan, "Akbar's Personality Traits and World Outlook - A Critical Reappraisal," in *Akbar and His India*, ed. Irfan Habib (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 79–96; Iqtidar Alam Khan, ed., *Akbar and His Age* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1999).

163 Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, 1872, 1:166–67; Wink, *Akbar*, 105.

164 This incomplete history is titled *Tarikh Alfi* and Muhammad's flight it called the Hijra.

165 For instance the Shia Mahdi movement. See Wink, *Akbar*, 103.

166 Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1924, 2:301.

Rather than claiming that Akbar promulgated a new religion I believe it is more helpful to think about his reign as a post-Islamic empire in which he sought to be the leader of each religious community. His rule was not legitimated by drawing upon Islamic notions of kingship in which the right to rule was established by the promotion and defence of Islam.[167] More precisely I would suggest it was the charisma and statecraft of Akbar to inculcate in each religious community that he was their emperor and the head of their community, which he did by using their symbols. Abul-Fazl captured the ideology of Akbar, writing:

> The world lord exercises world sway on the principle of 'universal peace,' every sect can assert its doctrine without apprehension, and everyone can worship God after his own fashion.[168]

Akbar adopted many of the outward signs of Hinduism in order to be a ruler for Hindus. According to Badauni, Akbar banned the consumption of beef, oxen, buffaloes, goats, horses and camels. Akbar appeared in court with the markers of a Hindu, a tika on his forehead, and a kalava around his wrist, which were invested by Brahmins, or Hindu priests. His Muslim courtiers imitated Akbar in this practice.[169] Badauni writes a Hindu priest was pulled up the wall of the castle to Akbar's bed-chamber and:

> he instructed his Majesty in the secrets and legends of Hinduism, in the manner of worshipping idols, the fire, the sun and stars, and of revering the chief gods of these unbelievers, such as Brahma, Mahadev, Bishn, Kishn, Ram and Mahama. Badauni writes: [Akbar] began also, at midnight and early dawn, to mutter the spells, which Hindus taught him, for the purpose of subduing the sun to his wishes.[170]

Akbar also adopted Christian symbols. A Jesuit missionary from Portugal who attended Akbar's court noted his religious ambiguity.[171] Their deputation believed Akbar was on the verge of, or had, become a Christian until they realised that the representatives of other religions also thought Akbar had joined their fold. Badauni writes:

> His Majesty firmly believed in the truth of the Christian religion, and wishing to spread the doctrines of Jesus, ordered Prince

167 Ram Prasad Tripathi, "The Turko-Mongol Theory of Kingship," in *The Mughal State, 1526-1750*, ed. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
168 Abu al-Fazal ibn Mubarak, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 3 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1876), 804.
169 Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1924, 2:261.
170 Badauni, 2:257; Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1925, 3:261.
171 Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J., on His Journey to the Court of Akbar.*

> Murad to take a few lessons in Christianity under good auspices,
> and charged Abul-fazl to translate the Gospel.[172]

That Akbar was a leader for each religious community is further supported by a Parsi story according to which Akbar not only abandoned Islam but was converted to Zoroastrianism by a Navsari priest named Meherji Rana (1514-1591). A popular oral tradition amongst Parsis both today and in the past recounts their meeting. Meherji Rana was a contemporary of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*'s author, Bahman, although from a different branch of the priesthood. The story begins at the court of religions with representatives of India's religions seeking to prove to Akbar the truthfulness of their own doctrines. A Hindu levitated a plate high into the air so that it blocked out the sun. The Muslims and representatives of the other religions sought in vain to bring the plate down. Meherji Rana then recited hymns from Zarathustra and the plate came tumbling down. Akbar was convinced of the truthfulness of Zarathustra's doctrines, and Meherji Rana invested Akbar with a sudreh and a kusti, the sacred thread and shirt that are the professions of Zoroastrian faith. A Zoroastrian fire was then instituted at the court.[173]

Parsis held an important place for Akbar as he and his dynasty used ancient Zoroastrian Iranian symbols of kingship and this represents a shift in power. After meeting with the Parsis of Navsari, Akbar instituted a Zoroastrian fire-temple in his court as had been the custom amongst the ancient Persian kings.[174] Akbar instituted the calendar of ancient Zoroastrian dynasties in which the first year is the accession of the most recent king; that is, the calendar restarted with each new king.[175] He minted copper coins using this calendar that proclaimed it as the Divine Era.[176] The names of the months were replaced with a Zoroastrian system and fourteen Zoroastrian festivals were introduced.[177]

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172 Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1924, 2:260.

173 Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *The Parsees at the Court of Akbar and Dastur Meherjee Rana.* (Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1903), I was told this story during fieldwork in India and there are also remediations into text. For instance, see; "The Story of Dasturji Meherji Rana and Other Zarathushtri Stories"; Margaret A. Mills, Peter J. Claus, and Sarah Diamond, eds., *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 466; There is arguably a song about this story by Tansen Akbar's court musician Modi, *The Parsees at the Court of Akbar and Dastur Meherjee Rana.*, 165; The conversion of Akbar to Zoroastrianism was a matter of dispute amongst Parsis in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as part of a dispute within the community over whether Zoroastrianism accept converts. See Ambashthya P. B., *Contributions on Akbar and the Parsees* (Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1976); Kharshedjee Nariman, *Dastur Meherji-Rana and the Emperor Akbar, Being a Complete Collection of the Editorials and Contributions Relating to This Controversy Conducted in the Indian Press,* (Navsari, 1918).

174 Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1924, 2:261.

175 For Parsis their calendar is dated from the accession of the last Sasanian Iranian Zoroastrian king Yazdergerd III.

176 Divine Era is a translation of Tarikh i Ilahi.

177 Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1924, 2:301,306; Mubarak, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, 1907, 2:15–18.

In court verses from the Shahnama were read, the eleventh century epic of the Zoroastrian Persian kings.[178]

The post-Islamic era was shaped by Parsis, and they were shaped by it. This is relevant for my argument because it rests on a link between Akbar and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* that has not previously been established. Badauni writes that Parsis attended Akbar's court:

> Fire-worshippers also came from Nousari [Navsari] in Gujrat, proclaimed the religion of Zardusht as the true one, and declared reverence to fire to be superior to every other kind of worship.[179]

Abul-Fazl also mentions coming across Parsis in a town 20km from Navsari.[180] He writes:

> I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zendavesta.[181]

From this overview of the transformations in Akbar's court we can see the shift in power relationships between Parsis and other communities. Parsis went from being persecuted under the previous sultanate to celebrated.

4.3 A power struggle between Parsi priests

Yet there is more to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* than a power shift between the emperor, Parsis, Muslims, and Hindus. There was also a power struggle amongst Parsi priests that created the historical revision. In the previous quote Abul-Fazl is referring to the Parsi priest named Meherji Rana who brought the plate tumbling down in Akbar's court. Significantly, Meherji Rana was from an alternative branch of the priesthood to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* author. The two branches had competed for leadership of the community for many centuries both before and after the poem's composition.[182] The priesthood had divided ecclesiastical duties into five areas where Parsis lived and priests were paid by lay people to perform various religious rites. Bahman's branch had lived in Sanjan with the Iranshah but, according to the poem, had been forced to move due to the Muslim invasion, eventually coming to Navsari where Meherji Rana's branch lived. There the two branches competed for the laity's business. I argue that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the revision of a refugee story is,

178 Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1924, 2:307.
179 Fire-worshippers refers to Zoroastrians and is generally considered pejorative. Badauni, 2:261.
180 The town is called Rainder. See Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, 1891, 2:243.
181 Mubarak, *Ain-I-Akbari*, 1872, 1:xii.
182 Piloo Nanavutty, *The Parsis* (New Delhi: Director, National Book Trust, 1980), 50; Eduljee, *Kisseh-i Sanjan*, 90–98; Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, 95–99.

in part, a historiographical response to a power struggle between Meherji Rana's branch of the priesthood who had become close to Akbar's court and the author's who had not.[183]

The glorification of Bahman's branch in the poem has previously been noted.[184] Bahman mentions his own name four times in the text and in one manuscript the person who copied the text has written his name at the end. Bahman was a dastur, a high priest, who in the text establishes his pedigree by listing his ancestors and the learned family he came from. He establishes his family's branch of the priesthood by stating their family name Sanjana towards the end of the poem writing:

> And know, my friends, his surname was Sanjana,
> he was endowed with knowledge for his work.
> His surname of Sanjana stood for knowledge,
> for he showed wisdom in Religion's work.
> They also named him Dastur of Religion,
> in every place he opened them to faith.[185]

We can also see how the poem has successfully promoted the claim of Bahman's branch relative to the Bhagaria because the poem has been transmitted through time to us today.

The poem offers an alternative vision of Parsi-Hindu solidarity against Muslims in response to Meherji Rana's engagement with the nominally Muslim emperor. Neither Meherji Rana nor Akbar feature in the poem and their omission appears calculated. Akbar's conquest 26 years prior would have been transformative for the Parsis as he lifted the Jizya tax that all non-Muslims had to pay. Meherji Rana died eight years before the composition of the poem and at the time of his death was understood to be the head of the Parsis. Akbar had granted land to Meherji Rana in Navsari shortly prior to the poem's composition, and another land grant was given to Meherji Rana's son in 1595.[186] Meherji Rana's branch had gained due to their involvement with Akbar's court whereas the author's had not. The poem appears to have succeeded in elevating Bahman's branch of the priesthood, as two years following its composition he and the priest who told him the story are recorded as the two most senior priests in Navsari.[187]

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183 Meherji Rana belongs to the Bhagaria branch whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction is Navsari and Bahman belongs to the Sanjana branch who are the custodians of the Iranshah fire.

184 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verse 407-13; Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*, 92.

185 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 137 Verse 412.

186 Modi, *The Parsees at the Court of Akbar and Dastur Meherjee Rana.*, 38.

187 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 3; Eduljee, *Kisseh-i Sanjan*, 42–43.

4.4 The *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* alliance with Hindus against Muslims

At this point we can bring together these dual shifts in power of Akbar's post-Islamic empire and the contest between branches of the Parsi priesthood in order to understand part of the reason why Parsi history was revised at this point in time. The poem uses history to guide Parsis in a relationship to preserve Zoroastrianism in an alliance with Hindus and cautions against rapprochement with Muslims. It suggests to Parsis that there can be no countenance with the syncretism of Akbar's court that Meherji Rana had engaged with. The poem presents a vision of a world without Akbar in which Parsis are linked by a history of Zoroastrian kings.

Central to the poem is an identity based upon religion, which can be seen in how the protagonists are identified. The protagonists are Muslims, Islam, infidels, Hindus, and two groups of Zoroastrians, the laity and their priests.[188] On arrival in India the Zoroastrians meet a king who is described as a Hindu, and later in the poem it is Zoroastrians and Hindus who defend India against Islam.[189] Significantly the term Parsi is only used once and this is towards the end.

The lesson for Parsis is that the very reason for their existence in India is persecution by Muslims in Iran. Bahman writes:

> When kingship went from Yazdegerd the king,
> the infidels arrived and took his throne.
> From that time forth Iran was smashed to pieces!
> Alas! That land of Faith now gone to ruin!...
> When every layman and dastur at once
> went into hiding for Religion's sake,
> Left homes, lands, gardens, villas, palaces,
> they left all for the sake of their Religion...
> So it is better we set off for Hend,
> and that we leave behind the wicked devils.
> Let everyone escape henceforth to Hend,

188 These are Dasturs and Mobeds. In Zoroastrian Iran there were four castes that collapsed into two in India.

189 For a discussion of pre-colonial identity see Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-Colonial India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 04 (1995): 692–722; Gijs Kruijtzer, *Xenophobia in Seventeenth-Century India* (First Leiden University Press, 2009); Bayly, "The Pre-History of '; Communalism'? Religious Conflict in India, 1700–1860."

to save our lives and for Religion's sake.[190]

On arrival in India a Zoroastrian priest meets with a Hindu king and negotiates a treaty trading asylum for a profession of loyalty, acculturation, and commonality. This king is named Jadi Rana and he is described in flattering terms. The priest tells the king

> For we are strangers, we have come to you for refuge and a home
> within your land. We've come here for the sake of our religion.[191]

When Jadi Rana looks upon the Parsis he becomes fearful for the security of his kingdom and gives five conditions of acculturation for the granting of asylum, which I will discuss these in the next chapter. The priest accepts the conditions and replies to the king:

> We are all friendly to the land of Hend, we'll slash your enemies in
> all directions.[192]

The priest then invokes the common ancestry of Hindus and Zoroastrians by claiming descent from King Jamshid.[193] He describes the commonality between Zoroastrianism and Hinduism downplaying the differences between the religions.[194] After hearing this the Hindu king accepts the Zoroastrians saying:

> Make for yourselves a refuge in my country.[195]

The Parsis build a town and begin to prosper dispersing over Gujarat.

The fulfilment of the asylum component of the treaty is represented by the consecration of the Iranshah and transference of Zoroastrian Iranian sovereignty onto Indian soil. Parsis ask the Hindu king to remove non-Zoroastrians from a section of land in order to make it ritually pure, and then ask permission to consecrate a fire temple.

> The prince said, 'I have given my permission.
> On this I am at one with you completely.
> It was my choice with all my soul for this,
> that in my life there should be such a king.[196]

The loyalty component of the treaty is then fulfilled in an epic battle fought by an alliance of Parsis and Hindus in defence of their common land against an invasion by

190 Hend is India Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verse 110-1.
191 Williams, 83 Verse 141-2.
192 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verse 163.
193 Jamshid is a more recent version of the Avesta Yama which corresponds to the Vedic Yima.
194 The priest says Zoroastrians hold the sun, moon, water, fire and cow in respect evoking the commensurability between Zoroastrian and Hindu beliefs. He describes the kusti, the sacred thread that Parsis wear around their waist which is similar to the sacred thread that upper caste Hindus wear. In nine verses he then describes the common restrictions that Zoroastrians and Hindus place on women.
195 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verse 184.
196 Williams Verse 201-2.

Muslims. Bahman writes:

> Five hundred years had come to pass in Hend, and Islam had arrived in Chapanir.[197]

The Hindu king falls unconscious on hearing that 30,000 troops are marching on his kingdom.[198] On recovering he calls upon the Zoroastrians to defend his kingdom by invoking the pact for asylum by saying:

> My forefathers have shown you preference,
> in your affairs they showed you every favour.
> Now gird your loins in this my hour of need,
> you will be in the vanguard of the battle.[199]

The poem then narrates two battles. In the first Bahman writes:

> An army was arrayed on either side, one for Islam, one for the Hindu prince.[200]

A bloody battle ensues in which the Hindus are decimated and it is only Zoroastrians left fighting the Muslim army. The Zoroastrians regroup led by a man named Ardashir. Williams argues that this was a symbolic choice by Bahman as it is the name of the first king of the last Iranian Zoroastrian Empire.[201] It was the defeat of this empire that precipitated the Zoroastrians departure to India. The gruesomeness of the battle is described finishing with

> Islam had fallen on that battlefield, slain in the battle with the noble prince.[202]

Bahman then describes the second battle in which the Hindus and Zoroastrians are defeated, and with the Hindu king killed, "his kingdom was laid waste."[203] This defeat leads to the dispersal of the Parsis, and they take the Iranshah into hiding in the hills.

The last section of the poem recounts the return of the Iranshah to Navsari and envisages Parsi sovereignty independent of Hindus or Muslims. The Iranshah's return is organised by a lay person who was wealthy and is remembered for sending an emissary to

197 Williams, 103 Verse 244.
198 However, the preceding verse is seemingly paradoxical for an anti-Muslim poem as he refers to a Muslim king as a "fortunate and virtuous king appeared, and in that province sat upon on the throne." As I will argue in the next chapter, the poem adapts a number of historiographical ideas from Muslims. The poem is paradoxically anti-Islamic yet draws from Islamic ideas. Williams, 103 Verse 245.
199 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verse 258-9.
200 Williams Verse 276.
201 Williams, 34.
202 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verse 307.
203 Williams, 125 Verse 352.

Iran in order to reconnect with their Zoroastrian brethren. The Iranshah is then returned to the custodianship of Bahman's branch of the priesthood.[204] It is important to note for comparison with later texts studied, the poem does not finish with Parsis and Hindus in an alliance, but with Parsis and their king, the Iranshah. The treaty has been fulfilled. Parsis have repaid the asylum given by one Hindu king by defending a latter Hindu kingdom against a Muslim invasion.

In part, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was created by the inexplicable shift with Akbar's post-Islamic empire. His rule ended the chaotic and oppressive rule of the sultanates. One branch of the Parsi priesthood had become close to Akbar's court and the author's had not. The poem revised an existing historical story about persecution and a pact for asylum in order to assert the leadership claims of Bahman's branch. Whereas Meherji Rana's branch represented a meeting with the post-Islamic empire, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* uses the past to ally the community with Hindus against Muslims. Bahman seeks to assert his branch's claim by narrating a history of Zoroastrian kings, which his branch were the custodians. But there is more to understanding how and why the poem was revised at this point in time. In the next chapter I will propose that the author was not really Bahman on his own, or shifting power relationships, the agent responsible was an augmented historian.

204 Williams, 158–59.

5. From the oral-history-human to the script-history-human

In order to understand how the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* came to be and its form of historical consciousness we must examine more than power because were concomitant shifts in historical conventions and a new medium for history, script. It is in the space between these shifts that we can find the agent responsible for the poem, script-history-bahman. This was a new type of augmented historian that was created, in part, by the shift in conventions with the development of Indo-Persian historiography. Indo-Persian is a term scholars have used to describe the new historical sensibility that was developing in Akbar's court.[205] There was an outpouring of historical writing relative to earlier periods as Akbar called for the transcription of oral accounts. Critically, writing augmented Bahman's capacity to transmit what happened through time and created an audience in the future. This represents a different history knowing entity to the oral-history-human it revises. However, writing does not occlude the oral Zoroastrian tradition as the poem seeks to create a sense of immediacy with the oral story because it is the first extant written revision. In the poem we can see both an oral-history-human who represents contemporary power challenges in the past in order to guide, but significantly the guidance offered is to a future audience due to the augmentation with script. Combined, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* uses history for a future claim to power based on a contemporary struggle between branches of the priesthood and Akbar's post-Islamic empire. We can then summarise the historical sensibility of the poem as a representation of the present in the past for a future audience.

This chapter generates a point of comparison for revisions studied later in this thesis in order to understand how colonialism and then globalisation has transformed historical thinking. This is important because the scholarship studying Indo-Persian histories tends to study it in isolation or in relation to other modes of Islamic historical writing. Studies of colonial era historiography or other non-Muslim historical sensibilities

205 For a discussion of Indo-Persian historiography see Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography.* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1952); Peter Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India; Studies in Indo-Muslim Historical Writing.* (London: Luzac, 1960); Mukhia, *Historians and Historiography during the Reign of Akbar*; M. Athar Ali, "The Use of Sources in Mughal Historiography," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Third Series)* 5, no. 03 (1995): 361–73; Abdur Rashid, "The Treatment of History by Muslim Historians in Mughal Official and Biographical Works," in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon,* ed. C. H Philips (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1961); Roy, "Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings: India 1350-1750"; Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography" Although this term is slightly ambiguous in the case of the Parsis who are both Indian and Persian, for the sake of clarity Indo-Persian will refer to the historiographical tradition that emerged out of the Mughal court.

are rarely understood in relationship to Indo-Persian historical writing. These are scholarly silos in which different eras and traditions are not understood in relation to each other but examined in isolation. The problem with such approaches is that we cannot understand how ideas are transformed if we do not understand their antecedents.[206] The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* offers us a window into a form of historical thinking, which existed prior to print, modernity, and the web.

5.1 The history of a king in India with a Persian cloak

In part the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was produced by the outpouring of historical writing, the transformation in the status of history, and historical conventions that occurred during Akbar's reign. Apart from the histories discussed in the previous chapter, Akbar commissioned a written millennial history of Islam and later the first Indian history.[207] His aunt wrote a history as did servants within his household.[208] It is telling that from a survey of Persian language historical writings, 475 are from India and 299 are from the rest of the world including Persia; the Indian works were largely composed during the Mughal period.[209] Badauni, the orthodox courtier who loathed Akbar's religious reforms, writes:

> we have to declare that the science of History is essentially a lofty science and an elegant branch of learning, because it is the fountain-head of the learning of the experienced, and the source of the experience of the learned and discriminating, and the writers of stories and biographies from the time of Adam to this present time in which we live, have completed reliable compositions and comprehensive works, and have proved the excellence thereof by proofs and demonstrations.[210]

Indo-Persian was the most recent layer on an Islamic historiographical sensibility that developed as a result of imperial expansion.[211] Early Muslim histories sought to recount the development of Islamic empires from the time of Muhammad. But as

206 Pollock, "Introduction."

207 The millennial history is titled the Tawarikh Alfi and was commenced under Akbar's orders in 1581CE although it was not completed. See Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," 589; The first Indian history was titled Tabaqat-i-Akbari. See Ali, "The Use of Sources in Mughal Historiography"; Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmad, Brajendranath De, and Baini Prashad, *The Tabaqat-I-Akbari: A History of India from the Early Musalman Invasions to the Thirty-Eighth Year of the Reign of Akbar* (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic society of Bengal, 1936).

208 Roy, "Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings: India 1350-1750," 161.

209 Roy, 159 citing C. A. Storey, Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey, vol.i, pt. 1 (London, 1927-39); and pt. 2 (London, 1953).

210 Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, 1898, 1:4.

211 Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," 573.

Muslims conquered new territories they encountered new peoples who needed to be incorporated into Islamic history. Similarly, the new converts sought to create histories that fused their own historical sensibility with an Islamic one. In this process new layers and forms of Islamic historical consciousness was produced. Following the conquest of the last Zoroastrian Empire, Iranian converts produced Persian language histories that combined Iranian and Islamic sensibilities into a distinctive tradition.[212] The later Islamicisation of the Turks and the Afghans in Central Asia and their subsequent conquest of India led to the development of a Turko-Islamic historical tradition in India that was pan-Islamic and extra-Indian.[213] In a sense Muslims became great historians, just as the British would later, because they were great imperialists.[214]

The innovation of Indo-Persian historiography was to combine Islamic, Persian, Mongol, and Turkic traditions into an account where the subject was the Indian king.[215] Whereas earlier Muslim histories were pan-Islamic and legitimised a sovereign's rule on the basis that they defended and promoted Islam, with Akbar history became a powerful legitimising tool for him and his dynasty as kings of India.[216] Indo-Persian histories are simultaneously Islamic and aware of pre-Islamic Iranian history, insofar as the style and structure draws upon both Islamic and Persian dynastic traditions for historical writing.[217] We can see this in the most celebrated Indo-Persian historical work, Abul-Fazl's *Akbarnama,* which uses history to legitimise Akbar's imperial rule in India.[218] For Abul-Fazl, Akbar's arrival is semi-divine and his right to rule is established by his lineage.[219] He claims Akbar's paternal side is descended from the Central Asian Turkic conqueror Timur and the

212 The Sasanians were the last Zoroastrian empire. The existence of a pre-Islamic Iranian historical tradition has been a mater of debate see Elton L. Daniel, "The Rise and Development of Persian Historiography," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. C. P Melville et al. (London: I.B.Tauris, 2012), 101–54; In support of a pre-Islamic historical sensibility see Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Daryaee, "National History or Keyanid History?"; C. P Melville, "Introduction," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. C. P Melville and Ehsan Yarshater (London: I.B.Tauris, 2012), xix–xxiii.

213 Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India; Studies in Indo-Muslim Historical Writing.*; Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography."

214 Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 104.

215 Tej Ram Sharma, *Historiography: A History of Historical Writing* (Concept Publishing Company, 2005), 79.

216 Roy, "Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings: India 1350-1750," 159.

217 Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," 572; Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, 7–8; The date for the commencement of the tradition has been debated, however scholars who locate it prior to Akbar or the Mughals agree that innovations were introduced during his reign. Roy argues that this tradition began in 1357CE Roy, "Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings: India 1350-1750"; Rashid, "The Treatment of History by Muslim Historians in Mughal Official and Biographical Works."

218 Roy, "Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings: India 1350-1750," 160; Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," 591; Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, 17.

219 Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, 42.

maternal side from the Mongol Chingiz Khan.[220] Abul-Fazl also claimed that one of Akbar's ancestors was "impregnated by the rays of the Sun."[221]

Indo-Persian histories were composed in Persian, which justified imperial power by invoking both Zoroastrian and Iranian notions of kingship. Yet Persian was not always the language of the Mughals and their ancestors, in fact Turkic was the language of the first generation of the dynasty. Akbar's father instituted Persian as the language of the court and Akbar's mother was an Iranian Shia.[222] The Turkic language autobiography Akbar's grandfather frequently referred to the Persian *Shahnama*.[223] For a dynasty descended from nomads the use of Persian and the invocation of ancient Iranian dynasties was legitimising.

We can then see how an Indo-Persian sensibility was adapted in the case of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* into a Persian language poem that used the past to legitimise the rule of the Iranshah and Bahman's branch of the priesthood. Bahman's capacity to produce the poem was the result of the augmentation of Indo-Persian conventions, which made a new type of Parsi historian. As noted in the previous chapter, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a dynastic account of the kings of Iran and Zoroastrianism. It has two parts: in Iran, it is the story of Zoroastrian kings, and in India it is the story of the Iranshah. Similarly, the poem's use of Persian was legitimising given its use by the Mughal court and its invocation of ancient Iranian dynasties. We can then see the first two aspects of the poem's historical sensibility, Persian and the king as the subject.

5.2 The script augmented historian's audience of the future

Significantly, history was transformed in this era by the introduction of a new medium, script. This together with new methods augmented a historian's capacity to transmit the past through time to the future. Script changed the existing oral relationship between history and human memory creating the possibility of an audience in the future. Both the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and Indo-Persian histories remediated oral histories to script. Akbar called for oral stories to be committed to writing as Abul-Fazl writes:

> royal commands were issued to the provinces, that those who from the old service remembered, with certainty or with adminicle of doubt, the events of the past, should copy out their notes and memoranda and transmit them to court...I examined both

220 Mukhia, 2.
221 Mukhia, 3.
222 Wink, *Akbar*, 6.
223 Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," 582.

> prudent, truth-speaking old men and active-minded, right-actioned young ones and reduced their statements to writing.[224]

Similarly Bahman remediated an existing oral story is suggested in the poem and the accounts of Europeans.[225]

I argue the process of remediating an oral story to script created an audience in the future and a heritage sensibility to save the past for the future. Writing changed the relationship between human memory and history creating a new augmented historian that I term a script-history-human. I would suggest that for an author who first transcribes an oral source, the contrast between the lack of durability of oral memory and writing generates a heritage impulse to remember. This is because manuscript has a greater degree of reproducibility and durability than orality. It is at the point of remediation from orality to writing that a heritage sensibility is created. Heritage is an impulse to remember a past that is liable to loss due to rapid change and transmit it to the future.

Durability is the capacity of a medium to transmit a story or source information through time independent of human involvement. An oral story requires a chain of people to remember and narrate the story in order for it to be transmitted through time. When the story is remediated into manuscript the degree of human involvement required for transmission is lessened. A manuscript still degrades but has a different magnitude of dependency upon people for its transmission. Our ability to acquire the raw material, or source a historical narrative is dependent upon the medium. Oral and script provide qualitatively and quantitatively different types of sources thus a different form of historical consciousness.

We can then see how the durability of manuscript created an audience in the future in the passage of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* from Bahman through to us today. The manuscript we have today was written by Bahman a little over four centuries ago and has moved through time as part of a collection of manuscripts collated by his grand nephew. It then passed

224 Mubarak, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, 1907, 1:30; Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," 584; Ali, "The Use of Sources in Mughal Historiography," 371.

225 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, Verse 67. That it was an oral story is corroborated by two European travellers who visited Navsari in the early seventeenth century. They retell a story of how the Parsis came to India following religious persecution in Iran and a treaty with a Hindu king. One traveller is Edward Terry who sailed to India in 1616 as a chaplain in the East India Company. His recounting of the Parsi story see Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India: Wherein Some Things Are Taken Notice of, in Our Passage Thither, but Many More in Our Abode There, within That Rich and Most Spacious Empire of the Great Mogul: Mixt with Some Parallel Observations and Inferences upon the Story, to Profit as Well as Delight the Reader* (J. Wilkie, 1777), 336–37; The other traveller is Henry Lord, *A Display of Two Forraigne Sects in the East Indies Vizt: The Sect of the Banians the Ancient Natiues of India and the Sect of the Persees the Ancient Inhabitants of Persia Together with the Religion and Maners of Each Sect*, vol. 1 (London: R. and R. Cotes for Francis Constable, 1630).

through generations of priests before being deposited in the library of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. Moreover, as Williams has argued, the poem is a "linguistic oddity" as Gujarati was the Parsis' vernacular.[226] Bahman wrote his poem in Persian, a language that few Parsis would have understood, but it would have been accessible to future priests as part of a manuscript copying tradition. We can also see how Bahman promoted his ascendancy for a future audience towards the end of the poem:

> I wrote like this about our people's times.
> Be sure that when a pious man might read it,
> he will send up a prayer for me in the future.[227]

An oral story also has a lower degree of reproducibility compared to a manuscript. In other words, the medium has a lower capacity to reproduce exact copies. Whereas an oral story will change slightly or even dramatically as each person retells it, a manuscript will change only slightly as it is recopied. This is not to suggest that a manuscript cannot change radically through the process of revising a story if the author so wishes, rather that if we were to compare an oral tradition which sought exact reproduction and a manuscript tradition which sought the same, the manuscript would change less over time. We can see this in the copies of Bahman's revision that we have today; there are slight variations, but the copies are largely the same. In other words, for orality the story changes through each person retelling it compared to the fixity of writing. Again, this is not to suggest one reproduces identical copies and the other does not, rather they are different by degrees.

We can then, in part, understand the historical sensibility expressed in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* by the augmentation of memory with script. When we combine the durability of script with an Indian king as the subject we can then see the temporal sensibility of this form of historical thinking. The durability of manuscript relative to orality created an audience in the future and a use of history to legitimise a dynasty. We can then surmise that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a use of the past to assert a future claim to leadership by Bahman's branch of the priesthood as custodians of the Zoroastrian king.

5.3 Immediacy with an oral historical sensibility

In part what makes the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* so interesting is that we can see the shadow of an oral historical sensibility at the first point of remediation to manuscript. This is oral sensibility is largely lost to us today due to the lack of durability and reproducibility of orality. Although there are many vibrant oral traditions, such as the Parsis, they have been

226 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 1.
227 Williams, 137 Verse 415-6.

modified by script and print. When Parsis today narrate the Sugar in the Milk story they incorporate aspects of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. In the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* we have a snapshot of an oral sensibility in 1599. We can understand facets of an oral sensibility using the theory of remediation because Bahman seeks to make the text transparent and transport the reader into how an oral story is narrated. He is seeking to create an unmediated experience with how the oral story was narrated at the time.

Although Indo-Persian historiography is part of the process that creates the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, there are significant differences in their sensibilities due to the different types of media they remediate. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is one step away from an oral historical sensibility whereas the Indo-Persian histories are a number of steps removed. According to Bahman the poem is sourced solely from an oral account whereas Indo-Persian accounts are sourced from oral and manuscript sources including chronicles, histories, and court records. In consequence, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* seeks to create a sense of immediacy with the oral tradition, whereas Indo-Persian histories seek immediacy with both the oral and written traditions that preceded it.

One aspect of an oral historical sensibility are strategies that focus on memorability, such as the use of verse and a short length.[228] For oral traditions the dual challenges of a lack of durability and reproducibility necessitate strategies for accurately remembering and retelling a story. These are mnemonic and narrative strategies to counteract changes in the story due to the medium's limited capacity to transmit the past through to the future.[229] One mnemonic strategy is the use of verse rather than prose, which we can see in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. The author sought to reproduce how the story was orally recited as poem. A poem is an oral mnemonic strategy because the metre facilitates a performer's recalling of the story.[230] An oral focus on memorability can also be seen in the length of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, it is only 5494 words. I would suggest Bahman was seeking to create a sense of immediacy with a single oral source and thus reproduced a characteristic of oral narratives: a focus on short memorable narratives.

Similarly the cyclical narrative and historical structure of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is an echo of an oral sensibility's focus on being memorable.[231] Williams' argues that the *Qesse-ye*

228 In the following I build upon the insights of Ong. See Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*.

229 According to Ong we can see the mnemonic strategies of orality in many aspects of Homer's epics, such as the use of verse and repetition, can be understood as a mnemonic strategy of orality. Ong and Hartley, 31–76.

230 Ong notes "Early written poetry everywhere, it seems, is at first necessarily a mimicking in script of oral performance." Ong and Hartley, 26.

231 Ong writes "One of the places where oral mnemonic structures and procedures manifest themselves most spectacularly is in their effect on narrative plot" Ong and Hartley, 138.

Sanjan has a cyclical three-part Zoroastrian narrative structure, which corresponds to a cosmology of creation, mixture, and resolution. He divides the poem into three parts, "Journey to India", "Dispersal, Victory and Defeat in India", and "The Journey of the Iran shah". This threefold cosmology is not only at the macro level in the stories three part narrative but also operates at a micro level within the poem where each sub-story conforms to this threefold movement.[232] We can take Williams' argument further by understanding the poem through the prism of remediation. I propose this cyclical sensibility is due to the remediation of an oral way of telling the story. The repetitive structure facilitates the process of remembering and the transmission of a story from one person to the next.

However, there is also a linear narrative structure in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* that is similar to Indo-Persian histories. We can understand this as a product of shifting Indo-Persian conventions. Both the poem and Indo-Persian histories begin with devotional verses to god before chronologically narrating the lineage of their dynasties, either from a first man or their prophet, and then finish with devotional verses to god. Indo-Persian histories inherited the chronological structure of Islamic dynastic histories beginning with praise for god, followed by praise of the prophet, then a sequence of rulers before coming to the current one.[233] The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* opens with praise for the Zoroastrian god Ahura Mazda, praise of the Zoroastrian prophet Zarathustra, and then tells the story of kings leading to the Iranshah. Scholars have noted the Islamic influences in the poem with the opening section fusing Zoroastrian and Islamic invocations to a deity.[234] In the Zoroastrian creation story there is no Adam and Eve or man made from clay, yet three times an Islamic creation story is invoked in the opening section.[235] The poem's opening doxology continues for 63 verses out the 433 verses in the text. This illustrates the larger linear narrative structure that encapsulates a three part cyclical structure. Thus, the historical sensibility of the poem is simultaneously cyclical, due to the remediation from an oral story, and linear, because it is a revision using new historical conventions that came with script.

232 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 23–30.
233 Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, 16–17; Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography.*; Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*.
234 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 144–53; Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*, 95.
235 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verses 11, 28, 59.

The immediacy with orality also help us understand why the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is rarely concerned with exact years.[236] For instance, after the Iranshah was consecrated Bahman describes how Parsis lived for "Three hundred years, or thereabouts"[237] before they dispersed over India, to Bharuch, Variav, Cambay, Anklesar, and Navsari.[238] Then for another 200 years Parsis lived in this dispersed condition living "in much delight, success and happiness."[239] When Bahman recounts his own lineage he writes of one of his ancestors "He had his residence in Navsari, two hundred years ago or thereabouts."[240] I propose the use of rounded years can be understood as an echo of an oral historical sensibility's rhetorical strategy in which events are located temporally relative to the previously narrated events. These rough dates indicate the relative distance between events rather locating events using a calendar. Bahman only relates exact dates twice in the poem, once for the 19 years Parsis spent at the island of Diu on their way to Gujarat, and once at the end of the text to indicate the date of its composition in 969AY[241] or 1599CE. The date of 969AY is using a Zoroastrian calendar and indicates 969 years since the accession of the last Zoroastrian king in Iran, Yazdegerd III.[242] Again, for an oral sensibility with a mnemonic focus, exact dates are unimportant.

There is also an oral echo in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* understanding of historical change as the result of divine will. A fatalistic reading of the process of historical causation is evident throughout the poem. After establishing the provenance of the story Bahman mentions the beginning of Zoroastrianism with the prophet Zarathustra and the Iranian king whom he converted. The downfall of Zoroastrianism following a thousand years is foretold by Zarathustra, the prophet of Ahura Mazda:

> He'd told of things to come in the Avesta,
> Oppressive kings will show themselves to you,
> Three times the Good Religion will be broken,
> each time the faithful will be crushed and wounded.[243]

The text then briefly describes three defeats using historical figures.

> When Zoroaster's thousandth year had come,

236 For more than a century Parsis have debated the date of their arrival in India and the events in the Qesse-ye Sanjan. These will be discussed in later chapters. For a recent example of the debate see Eduljee, *Kisseh-i Sanjan*; and also Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*.
237 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 99 Verse 224.
238 All towns in contemporary Gujarat.
239 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verse 231.
240 Williams, 137 Verse 413.
241 AY = After Yazdergerd III the last Sasanian king.
242 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 1,139 Verse 420.
243 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verse 78-9.

the limit of the Noble Faith came too.
When kingship went from Yazdegerd the king,
the infidels arrived and took his throne.
From that time forth Iran was smashed to pieces!
Alas! That land of Faith now gone to ruin![244]

The poem describes how a priest read an astrological chart and determined that the Zoroastrians should leave Iran. On their way to India by boat it is Ahura Mazda, the Zoroastrian god, who saves the Parsis from a storm at sea. Critically, as the narrated events approach the author's own time there is a shift to a causal explanation for understanding historical change. It is not god who is acting in the world, but humans.

Significantly, the short length, the cyclical sensibility, the lack of dating, and a divine understanding of causation do not create a sense of distance to the past. What I mean by this is how far away the past feels or its foreignness relative to our present. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* does not create a sense of what it was like to be a Parsi when they first arrived in India. Nor does it create a sense of what it was like to defend their land against an invasion by Muslims. Rather, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* transport a future reader into Bahman's present rather than the historical events he narrates. This is because although the poem narrates events and people who largely existed, the story has changed as it has been retold from person to person. By contrast, the remediation to script created a snapshot of Parsi history-telling in the year 1599, which can then transport us to this time.

5.4 Authorial authority and an oral method for knowing the past

There has been significant debate over whether the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a work of history or not.[245] But I do not find a debate over historical accuracy the most helpful way to frame our thinking. All historical narratives are broadly concerned with events and people that are purported to have existed, whereas this is not important to other narrative forms. Rather, I think it is more helpful to examine how a historical story creates a sense of believability in the mind of the listener, reader, viewer, or user, together with the method used to acquire the historical information on which the story is based. The author establishes the authenticity of their account and their authority to narrate history by using a method to know the past that the reader considers historical. It is then not a question of

244 Williams Verse 95-7.

245 I will discuss these debates in detail in the chapters examining The Early History of the Parsees. But for now see Modi, *Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.*; Bhathena, *Kisse-Sanjan. A Palpable Falsehood.*

which method creates a more historically accurate narrative, but how does a particular method create a specific historical sensibility. In the case of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the other revisions studied here, it is a question of how they acquire and seek to establish authorial authority to narrate the past. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and Indo-Persian histories use different methods to establish authority in the minds of their readers, however both seek to produce a narrative about people and events that purported to have existed.

Scholars have argued that one of the innovations of Indo-Persian historiography is a critical evaluation of a source's reliability.[246] This method for interrogating contradictory sources to evaluate which source seemed the most plausible has been called a doctrine of "inherent probability".[247] Indo-Persian historians sought to corroborate sources without acknowledging them in the text.[248] Abul-Fazl writes of his method:

> the House of History was become decayed from lapse of time, and there were contradictions and imperfections in the accounts and no sufficient means of clearing up difficulties... By repeated interviews I arrived at correctness and erased doubts and difficulties with the knife of investigation and ascertainment.[249]

By contrast the author of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* establishes the veracity and his authority to narrate history for a future Zoroastrian priest by referencing the lineage of priests who have transmitted the story. The poem's sources are acknowledged because Bahman's claim is linked to the same tradition that has faithfully transmitted and preserved the teachings of Zarathustra, the priesthood. In this historical sensibility the account's authenticity is established for the Zoroastrian reader by its transmission through the priestly tradition's mechanism for propagating the religion. In other words, textual authority was established by invoking the priestly convention of manuscript copying. These are stylistic conventions for claiming authority. It is important to note that in the

246 Roy, "Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings: India 1350-1750," 167; Ali, "The Use of Sources in Mughal Historiography"; Rashid, "The Treatment of History by Muslim Historians in Mughal Official and Biographical Works"; Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India; Studies in Indo-Muslim Historical Writing*.

247 Ali, "The Use of Sources in Mughal Historiography," 372.

248 Ali, 361–62, 369.

249 It appears to me that this method of using repeated interviews is derived from the Islamic tradition of Isnad, which critically evaluates the veracity of Muhammad's sayings and actions. These are collectively known as the hadiths. The genealogy of the transmission of an utterance through generations of Islamic scholars is compared with other genealogies and records. Each scholar in the chain is authenticated as having lived in that time and as an authority. Thus, in the tradition of the hadiths there was a system to authenticate which were the true utterances of the Islamic prophet and which were false. Mubarak, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, 1907, 1:31–32.

poem's sensibility, the past is acquired from those who narrated it before. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is not an original investigation into the past but a reworking of an earlier account. The authority of earlier accounts is not discussed, it is simply assumed because they came from a priest. Following the opening doxology Bahman begins the story by establishing the priest who told him the story writing:

> Now listen to the tales of wondrous things,
> told from the lore of priests and ancient sages,
> I came to hear it from a wise dastur,
> whose goodness made him famous for all time

The authority of this priest and his reliability as a vehicle to transmit the story is attested to within the text by his religiosity and the veneration of Navsari's Parsis. It is written:

> The dastur was conspicuous in his town,
> by him the faith was constantly enlightened...
> In his own town, in which he was the master,
> his pupils' hearts and souls rejoiced with him,
> He told this tale just as the ancients told it,
> he spoke the hidden mysteries of the righteous.[250]

The author's lineage and that of the 'wise dastur' who told him the tale is established at the end writing:

> I am that wretched man whose name is Bahman,
> my house and dwelling place are in Navsari.
> And Kay Qobad, know also, is my father,
> whose heart rejoices in Iran Shah's memory.
> His father was the dastur Hormazdyar.[251]

To a degree this method has faithfully transmitted the past, although this is not a claim of this thesis. Rather, it is that Bahman has a method for acquiring the raw material of the story and its representation in narrative form. We can then compare Bahman's method with the method used in later revisions. At this point it is worthwhile noting that the poem contains a number of historical people such as Alexander of Macedon who conquered the Achaemenid dynasty, followed by the resurrection of a Zoroastrian dynasty with Ardeshir the founder of the Sasanian Empire. Again the religion falls and is revived with King Shapur until the defeat of Yazdergerd III by the Arabs, the last Zoroastrian king

250 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*, 69 Verse 69, 72-3.
251 Williams, 135 Verse 407-9.

of Iran and the end of the Sasanian Empire. There are historical places and events such as their defeat in Iran through to a number of Parsis who lived in the two centuries prior to the poem's composition.[252] Thus the priestly route for transmitting the past produced an account that can partially be corroborated. But it is important to note that corroboration is not part of the historical sensibility expressed in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*.

5.5 Didactic history and a representation of the present in the past

Rather than examining whether the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is factual, it is more helpful to view this as a didactic sensibility in which the past is used in order to guide. Here I build upon Alan Williams' reading of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* as a mirror of late 16th century Parsi practices that guides Parsis.[253] Didactic history is generally understood as the telling of a story set in the past in order to help guide the audience through some contemporary challenge. This is how historical story is often used when narrated orally. Didactic history is a response to a collective challenge or a personal problem, and a narrator will then tell a story describing how someone in the past addressed the same, or an analogous, challenge. In this sense, contemporary challenges are represented in the remembered past. Didactic history does not tell someone what they should do or the solution because the point of the story is to express the ambiguity of the problem at hand and this allows the audience to come to their own solution.

However, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is is a twist on what is classically understood as didactic history because the guidance offered is not to Bahman's present day audience, but a future one because of the remediation to script. This sensibility comes about due to the meeting of an oral didactic sensibility and script's audience in the future. The shifts in power with Akbar's court produce an alternate vision to the post-Islamic empire, and this vision is represented in the remembered past. It is a historical story because it describes events and people in the past but the meaning of these events is derived from a projection of contemporary Parsi practices. The lesson for future priests is clear: do not meet with Muslims because they have sought to destroy Zoroastrianism but instead find a meeting point with Hindus so that a Zoroastrian king may live on in the custodianship of Bahman's branch of the priesthood.

252 Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora* Verses 82, 89, 96, 226-9, 369.
253 Williams.

One of the features of the history-myth debate are the five conditions for asylum that the Hindu king presented to the Parsis on arrival in India. As I will show in later chapters, Parsis have vigorously debated whether they were persecuted in Iran, whether there was a king named Jadi Rana, and whether such conditions were given at the time of their arrival. In the poem the king says to the priest:

> First I shall see the features of your faith,
> then later we shall grant a place for you.
> And next, they must renounce the language
> of their own native land to gain asylum.
> They shall give up the language of Iran
> and speak the language of the land of Hend.
> Third, as to mode of dress, your womenfolk
> shall wear such garments as our women wear.
> The fourth, they shall lay down these swords and weapons,
> and never more shall gird them on again.
> The fifth, when they perform the noble act
> of children, on that night they should be married.[254]

In an interview I conducted with Shernaz Cama, the leader of the Parzor project and the author of the final revision studied in this thesis, she said there must be some truth in these conditions because they represent Parsi practices. Parsis do speak Gujarati and have largely forsworn Persian; Parsi women often wear saris or clothing similar to Gujarati Hindus; they do not carry weapons, and marry in the evening.[255] In a sense the question is: were these conditions actually given by a Hindu king to a Zoroastrian priest when they arrived in India, or are these conditions a representation of Parsi practices in 1599? I would say both because many events in the poem have been corroborated, although it is very difficult to find corroborating sources for the encounter, but at the same time it is a representation of contemporary practices in the past. If we focus on historical accuracy then we miss the central purpose of history-telling in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, a representation of Parsi practices from 1599 in historical events to guide future Parsi priests in a successful strategy for living amongst more dominant communities. The poem inculcates the purpose of the community as the preservation of Zoroastrianism in a non-Zoroastrian environment and a strategy to achieve this outcome.

254 Williams Verse 153-8.

255 From an interview with Shernaz Cama on 26 October 2013 in Delhi. It should be noted that Parsi women wear saris in a slightly different style to Gujarati Hindus. However, the Parsi style has become the dominant All-India style.

5.6 Historical thinking on the cusp of the parenthesis

Consequently, at this point we can summarise the answer to the question that drove these two chapters: why was the Parsis first written history composed in the late sixteenth century, and what forms of historical historical consciousness does it express? I have argued that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was composed because a new augmented historian was created: script-history-bahman. This agent exists in between Bahman, shifts in power with Akbar's post-Islamic empire, the shift in historiographical conventions with the development of Indo-Persian, and the use of a new medium, script. Significantly, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* creates a point of comparison for understanding how print, colonialism, and modernity transformed historical consciousness. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* can be summarised as a representation of the present in the past for a future audience. Thus we can see a type of historical consciousness before Parsis entered the metaphorical parenthesis of print.

6. Karaka's 1858 *The Parsees* and a historical defence of British colonial rule

In 1608 and within living memory of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* composition, the British East India Company arrived in areas where Parsis lived. Over the following centuries the Company progressively acquired sovereignty through war and treaty. The Parsis became wealthy as an intermediary community between the Company and the Indian hinterland. Their close engagement with the British and Europeans transformed the community and their historical sensibility. However, in 1857 this mutually dependent relationship was challenged by a revolt in northern India against Company rule. Its brutal suppression over the next two years resulted in the formal end of the Mughal Empire and the British government's annexation of a significant proportion of South Asia.

In the midst of this revolt a young Parsi named Dosabhai Framji Karaka (1829-1902) published the first print history of the Parsis titled *The Parsees: their history, manners, customs, and religion*. The historical story told in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is revised, but for a very different purpose; history is used to defend British colonial rule.[256] In the preface Karaka writes:

> The object of the present work is to make the English public acquainted with the history, belief, and manners of the Parsees, who, though unimportant in point of numbers, have, by their commercial habits, formed an important link between the English in India and the native inhabitants. Throughout the rebellion in the East the Parsees have maintained an unshaken loyalty to the British, whom they are proud to call their fellow subjects, and while preserving their own independence of religion and customs, their chief desire is that the British rule in India should be consolidated upon a basis of strict justice and mutual interest.[257]

Karaka was an important person as, at the time, he was a Censor of the Native Press and would go on to become the first Indian Chief Presidency Magistrate, the first Indian Chairman of the Bombay Municipality, and a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council.[258] Karaka's picture is in illustration three, showing him wearing a Parsi hat and a

256 Karaka cites the Qesse-ye Sanjanas the source for his narrative of the Parsis flight to India and their encounter with Hindus. See Karaka, The Parsees, 7.

257 Karaka, x.

Illustration 3: W. Roffe, *Dosabhai Framji Karaka*, engraving, in History of the Parsis, vol. 1, (London: Macmillan and Co, 1884).

258 Bombay was renamed Mumbai in 1995. In the thesis I will refer to it as Mumbai except in original quotations and names. Indian Bibliographic Centre Research Wing, *Dictionary of Indian Biography* (Varanasi: Indian Bibliographic Centre, 2000), 229; Hormusji Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil* (Bombay: G. Claridge, 1939), 152.

colonial medal. In an 1886 collected pictorial biography of the people of western India it is written "Mr. Dosabhai may be called the first historian of the renowned Parsi race"[259] and his histories are still reprinted and read by Parsis today. Karaka's histories are exemplary for the time and offer a window into mid nineteenth century Parsi historical consciousness.

Over the next three chapters I examine how and why history was revised to create *The Parsees* and its form of historical consciousness. In order for the Parsi story to move through time it needed to be revised by a new host. Just as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was understood through the prism of a theory of historiographical agency, I contend that the agent responsible for the production of *The Parsees* was an augmented historian I term print-history-karaka. Karaka was augmented by the shifts in power with the challenge to colonial rule, the development of new historiographical conventions with British rule, and the use of print as both a source for history and a medium for historical narration. Significantly, the historical consciousness expressed in *The Parsees* forms a point of comparison with both the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the histories I study in later chapters.

In order to understand the action that produced *The Parsees*, this chapter asks, what challenges provoked the revision of Parsi history? I contend *The Parsees* sought to historically explain the challenge to colonial rule and specifically its aim was to understand the 1857 uprising. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and other Parsi histories could not explain colonial rule and their community's relationship with the British. Karaka used a historical argument to justify colonial rule by comparing the Parsis present position in colonial India in which they could practice their religion freely and engage in commerce relative to the past chaos of Hindu rule and oppression under Muslims.

6.1 British conquest

The British conquest of India was a piecemeal process that began with trade and then developed over more than two centuries. In the late sixteenth century British interest was piqued by a Jesuit missionary and British travellers who wrote about the wealth of the Mughal Empire.[260] As a result the British East India Company was formed in 1600 from a

259 R. H Jalbhoy, *The Portrait Gallery of Western India, Embellished with 51 Life-like Portraits of the Princes, Chiefs, and Nobles, from Celebrated Artists in London; Enriched with Historical, Political and Biographical Accounts from the Most Authentic Sources, in Gujarati and English.* (Bombay: Printed at the Education Society's Press, Byculla, 1886).

260 But the British were not the first Europeans to trade in India. Earlier in the sixteenth century the overland trade route from Europe to India was supplanted with a sea route firstly by the Portuguese then by the French, and then the Dutch.

collection of earlier trading groups and granted a monopoly on Asian trade with Britain.[261] They traded pepper, spices, cotton, silk, indigo, saltpetre, sugar, tea, and coffee.[262] It is important to note the, often, benign beginnings of conquest and how British colonialism in particular, and imperialism more generally is an emergent phenomenon.

The beginning of the Anglo-Parsi engagement occurred in Surat and was coincidental. The British wanted to trade with the Mughals and Surat was the Mughals' primary port for seaborne trade and pilgrimage to Mecca. In 1612 the English built a trading factory in Surat and the town became the commercial meeting point with the Mughals.[263] As mentioned in the previous chapters, Surat is located only 20km from Navsari and Parsis lived in both towns leading to a meeting with the British.

Trade between Europeans and the Mughals was facilitated by Parsis along with other Hindu and Muslim communities living in the area.[264] The Parsis did not see the British as a threat as they came to trade and offered an opportunity to generate wealth.[265] Initially the Parsis were artisans but by 1689 they were the principal weavers for the British and also adapted their existing craft of ship building for British requirements.[266] The first notable wealthy Parsi merchant mediated between the British and the Mughal court at the beginning of the eighteenth century.[267] Parsis became so wedded to this trade it is estimated that by 1746 all their trade was with Europeans.[268]

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261 Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, 8.

262 White, *Competition and Collaboration: Parsi Merchants and the English East India Company in 18th Century India*, 7.

263 In the same year the British also defeated a Portuguese armada off the coast of Gujarat. Makrand Mehta, *History of international trade and customs duties in Gujarat* (Vadodara: Darshak Itihas Nidhi, 2009); Michelguglielmo Torri, "Mughal Nobles, Indian Merchants and the Beginning of British Conquest in Western India: The Case of Surat 1756-1759"; Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, 8.

264 Christine Dobbin, *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities: Conjoint Communities in the Making of the World-Economy 1570-1940*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series; No. 71 (London: Curzon, 1996), 77; A. Das Gupta, "Merchants of Maritime India, 1500-1800," in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 100, 1994, 1500–1800; Ashin Gupta, "Indian Merchants and the Western Indian Ocean: The Early Seventeenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 19, no. 3 (1985): 481–99; Makrand Mehta, *Indian Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Historical Perspective: With Special Reference to Shroffs of Gujarat, 17th to 19th Centuries* (Delhi: Academic Foundation, 1991); Michelguglielmo Torri, "Mughal Nobles, Indian Merchants and the Beginning of British Conquest in Western India: The Case of Surat 1756-1759"; Michael Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Michael Pearson, "Brokers in Western Indian Port Cities Their Role in Servicing Foreign Merchants," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (January 1, 1988): 455–72.

265 Rather, it was the Portuguese with their aggressive proselyting, territorial conquest, and state sponsored piracy off the Gujarati coast who were viewed as a threat.

266 Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, 52; Dobbin, *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities*.

267 This was Rustom Maneck of Surat. See David L. White, "From Crisis to Community Definition: The Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Parsi Philanthropy," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 2 (May 1, 1991): 303–20; Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 32–33.

268 Guha, "More about the Parsi Seths," 119.

The Parsis were enticed by the stability of British rule as from the late seventeenth century the Mughal Empire began to decline and their rule over lands where Parsis lived became increasingly unstable.[269] The Mughal emperor of the time abandoned the pluralistic policies of his great-grandfather Akbar and began to discriminate against non-Muslims, which in turn generated resentment.[270] At the same time a rising Hindu Maratha Empire to the south began to expand northwards, sacking Surat and Mughal controlled areas in southern Gujarat. In this way, Parsis were caught between disintegrating Mughal rule from the north and the expansion of Maratha rule from the south.

As a consequence Parsis and other trading communities accepted a British invitation to migrate to Mumbai.[271] In 1662 the island of Mumbai was transferred from Portuguese to British control as part of a royal dowry gift, and the British government then leased Mumbai to the Company.[272] Within a decade the Company shifted its headquarters from Surat to Mumbai and encouraged Parsi weavers to migrate with them by granting land.[273] Migration increased in 1736 following a British invitation to Parsi shipbuilders.[274] Migration was also enabled by the financial support of wealthy Parsi families.[275] The mass migration of Parsis to Mumbai began in the late eighteenth so that by 1812 Parsis accounted for 12% of Mumbai's population, and they made up just over half the population of the fort area.[276]

For the British, the Parsi community initially offered a means to trade and wealth but with time they also became essential for governance. By employing Parsis as intermediaries the British avoided the need to understand the nuances of cultural practices in India. For instance, one of the Company's first acts on acquiring Mumbai was the employment of a Parsi to collect the body tax and a short time after he organised the

269 The reasons have been a matter of debate and are beyond the scope of this thesis. What is important for my argument is that the stability provided by Mughal rule broke down.

270 This was Aurangzeb.

271 These were the towns of Navsari, Surat and Gandevi. See Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 178–79; In this period Hindu and Jain traders also began migrating to Mumbai due to religious repression under Aurangzeb. See Mehta, *Indian Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Historical Perspective*, 82–83.

272 Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, 35.

273 M. D David, *History of Bombay, 1661-1708* (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1973), 136–37; Dobbin, *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities*, 2.

274 This was the scion of the Wadia group, Lowji Wadia. See Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 179.

275 Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, 40–42.

276 By 1881 there were 85,397 Parsis and 57% lived in Mumbai. Palsetia, 40; Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 34.

town's defence from an attack by local fisherman.[277] The Company was also lent money to expand their operations by wealthy Parsis.

6.2 The Anglo-Parsi engagement in Mumbai

It was in Mumbai that the Parsis integrated into the economic, political, and cultural world of colonial power.[278] Here the community became spectacularly wealthy through a symbiotic relationship with the British in which they avoided direct competition.[279] By 1800 nearly every European trading house employed a Parsi and thus nearly all the trade between Europe and India that went through Mumbai had some Parsi involvement.[280] It is important to note that Mumbai was a central pillar of the British Empire and a trading network that spanned the planet. Parsis also engaged in direct trade with other Asian countries with many becoming wealthy trading tea, cotton, and opium with Asia.[281] In particular, they came to dominate the trade with China and by 1800, Parsi firms were located all over India and in Canton.[282] The wealth from trade propelled Parsis into land owning, banking and industry so that by 1855 it has been estimated that Parsis owned half of all the land in Mumbai.[283] When the Bank of Mumbai was established in 1840 one third of the shareholders were Parsis, and they established the first cotton mills in 1854 going on to dominate the industry.[284] Effectively that became one of India's first bourgeois communities.

Merchant wealth transformed the internal power dynamics between priests and the laity. This is illustrated by the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, the community's peak body in Mumbai, which was formed sometime between 1723 and 1725. The Panchayat adjudicated

277 His name was Dorabji Nanabhai. In 1692 he raised a militia to defend the island from an attack of Sidis. The British governor conferred the title of Patel on to him and his descendants. See Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 176; M. D David, *Bombay, the City of Dreams: A History of the First City in India* (Bombay: Himalaya Pub. House, 1995), 435; Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, 90.

278 Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, 28.

279 The British initially encouraged Parsi ship building but then undermined it. See Guha, "Parsi Seths as Entrepreneurs, 1750-1850."

280 Dobbin, *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities*, 83; Parsis were engaged as commission businesses, brokers, shipping agents, in storage and in auctioneering. See Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 121.

281 Parsis were prevented by the British from engaging directly with Europe. Dobbin, *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities*, 84–85; Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 181; Guha, "Parsi Seths as Entrepreneurs, 1750-1850," M–109; Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, 59.

282 Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 121; Guha, "Parsi Seths as Entrepreneurs, 1750-1850," 107.

283 Dobbin, *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities*, 90.

284 Parsis established 9 of a total of 13 cotton mills in Mumbai between 1854 and 1870. In 1925 Parsis made up 49 of the 175 directors of Mumbai cotton mills. In 1931 the Tata group had the largest India control of cotton companies. See Dobbin, 88–89, 95; Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 191–92; Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 122–27.

disputes between Parsis, meted out punishment, and sought to define the community's identity by declaring who was a Parsi and who was not. It was a system of self-governance that was recognised by the British. In Gujarat Parsis had adapted this model of caste governance from non-Parsis but unlike other panchayats in Gujarat, the Mumbai organisation did not have five priests on its committee, it had five merchants. As a consequence, the boundaries between priests and laity, as defined by marriage, began to breakdown.[285]

An example of the community's transformation is the Parsi merchant Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy (1783-1859). He was wealthy, an anglophile, a philanthropist, and the first Indian conferred as a British knight.[286] Jeejeebhoy was born into a poor family in Mumbai but grew up in Navsari, his parents' hometown. In 1799, he embarked on his first voyage to China and from there began building a trading empire on opium and cotton. Trade expanded to encompass Bengal, Chennai, Sumatra, Thailand, and Alexandria.[287] In 1822 Jeejeebhoy turned to philanthropy, which his Parsi biographer bombastically reflected on just over forty years later:

> The thirsty he had supplied with water; the religious he had supplied with fire-temples; the debtors he had supplied with money and the poor he had supplied with food and clothing.[288]

Jeejeebhoy funded the construction of a causeway linking some of Mumbai's islands, as well as hospitals, and schools; some were exclusively for Parsis and others were cosmopolitan.[289] Parsi writing of the nineteenth century was triumphant, which we can see in the writing of his biographer:

> An Indian, a descendant, of the race that was driven out by the bloody Mahomedans from Persia, who sought refuge in the cities of the "mild Hindoo," and eventually took shelter under the British Power, made a Knight? Yes![290]

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285 Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, For a study of the BPP see.

286 Asiya Siddiqi, "The Business World of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy," *Indian Economic And Social History Review* 19, no. 3–4 (1982): 301–24; Jesse S. Palsetia, "PARTNER IN EMPIRE Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and the Public Culture of Nineteenth-Century Bombay," in *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, ed. Alan Williams and John R. Hinnells (New York: Routledge, 2007); Palsetia, "The Parsis of India and the Opium Trade in China"; Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, 54.

287 For the life of Jeejeebhoy see Cooverjee Sorabjee Nazir, *The First Parsee Baronet: Being Passages from the Life and Fortunes of the Late Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Baronet* (Bombay, 1866).

288 Nazir, 47–48.

289 Mahim to Bandra.

290 Nazir, *The First Parsee Baronet: Being Passages from the Life and Fortunes of the Late Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Baronet*, 74.

Parsis are central to the process by which the British and the Indians came to imagine themselves and each other. From the eighteenth century the British had sought to understand the similarities and differences between themselves and Indians. Through this inquiry they had come to attribute certain character and cultural traits as European, or Occidental, in contrast to Asian, or Oriental. Parsis are important because they are imagined by both themselves and the British as being in between Oriental and Occidental. In this view, prior to the British arrival they were Oriental but their adaptation to British civilisation means they almost become Occidental. Parsis were portrayed as exemplary Orientals almost Occidental in order to illustrate to other Indians that they could too become Occidental. For example, the Parsis' life in Mumbai was described by a British editor of the *Mumbai Times* as of "half eastern and a half western character."[291] Similarly, Karaka writes:

> The Parsee mode of life may be described as half-European and half-Hindoo.[292]

Parsis accepted and were part of the creation of this way of understanding the world. They were not passive. This sense of being in-between can be seen in a painting of Jeejeebhoy in illustration four. He bears the marker of a Parsi with his Zoroastrian hat but has the air of a European merchant with a Chinese servant showing him some papers. Karaka writes:

> Of all the nations now in India, the Parsees the most nearly approximate to Europeans...Under the fostering protection of an enlightened Government, the civilization of the Parsees commenced, and has since proceeded with such rapid strides, that year by year they are becoming more Europeanized[293]

It is important to note that colonialism was both a territorial conquest and a conquest of people's minds. The British ruled India with very few resources because elite Indians thought Europeans were more advanced.[294]

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291 George Buist, "SIR JAMSETJEE JEEJEEBHOY: A PARSEE MERCHANT," *North American Review* 73, no. 1 (1851): 137.
292 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 70.
293 Karaka, 281.
294 I will expand upon this sensibility in the following two chapters.

Illustration 4: George Chinnery, *Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy*, oil on canvas, in A Zoroastrian Tapestry, (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2002).

The Parsis' nineteenth century relationship with the British needs to be understood within the context of their position as a small, but powerful and wealthy community. Parsis had never ruled anywhere in India and were not displaced by the British so initially they did not resist colonial rule—to the contrary, they profited from it. For Parsis, the origins of whoever ruled had little relevance, it did not matter if they were Mughals, Hindus, or British. Foreignness was not an issue for a community of Zoroastrians from Iran living in India. Rather, what was vital for Parsis and other trading communities of the time was the quality of governance, the capacity to provide the sort of stability required for commerce, their ability to access these rulers, and freedom to practise their religion. Karaka writes:

> To the British power in India the Parsees are chiefly indebted for their present position. Under its authority their commercial spirit revived, and they began for the first time to reap the fruit of their own industry. The native governments of India had invariably acted as a check to industry and enterprise—no man could enjoy the fruits of his own labour, as the people were constantly subjected to the caprice of the ruler, and the tyranny and oppression of his innumerable hosts of subordinate officers.[295]

In this quote we can see how the Parsis had become wedded to British power and how this relationship was understood historically.

6.3 The 1857 uprising against British rule

In 1857 the Anglo-Parsi engagement was shaken as Hindu and Muslim soldiers employed by the Company began a rebellion that has been variously called the Indian Rebellion, the Indian Mutiny, and India's First War of Independence. There had been numerous uprisings against the Company but this was the first to offer a serious challenge to British expansion.[296] The rebellion was given nominal support from the last Mughal emperor, although by this time the Mughal Empire was a shadow of its former glory reduced to control over parts of Delhi.[297] The uprising was ruthlessly suppressed and precipitated the British Crown's annexation of India and the formal end of the Mughal dynasty. The uprising did not spread to Mumbai and there is no record of Parsis providing support.

295 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 137–38.

296 For the 1857 uprising and those that preceded it, see Christopher Alan Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 169–99.

297 The last emperor was Bahadur Shah Zafar.

I propose that the uprising was a contingency that the Parsis' existing historical accounts could not explain. Karaka responded by publishing two histories in 1858 to declare the Parsis' loyalty to the British and to garner support for British rule from Indians. The first was *The British Raj contrasted with its predecessors* and *The Parsees* was second. In 1884, Karaka published an expanded version of *The Parsees* titled *History of the Parsis.*[298] This later work is popular amongst Parsis to this day and is still in print.

In the *British Raj* Karaka uses a historical argument to establish the beneficence of British rule by comparing it favourably with earlier governments.[299] Initially addressed to Indians it was published in Gujarati and Marathi, and later translated into English for a British audience. The book narrates a history for all of India to persuade its audience that:

> English dominion had been followed by the establishment of peace in all the borders of the land; by a firm and upright administration of the laws, and by a security of life and property.[300]

He compared British dominion with Mughal rule that was marked by "bloody cruelties" and "relentless persecution". Karaka then claims there was an improvement in the quality of rule as the Mughal Empire declined and Hindu rule developed in Gujarat and Maharashtra. However, Hindu rule was arbitrary and confused because the rulers engaged in petty quarrels that did not result in peace. He likened them to "all Asiatic governments" drawing upon a trope of oriental despotism. Karaka spent only a page repudiating Hindu rule before turning "to the more peaceful and happy times of the British dominion."[301] Under British sovereignty India

> for the first period in her history, has the prospect of a glorious future under the rule of a powerful, just, and enlightened administration.[302]

Karaka forgives the minor faults of the British as they enact laws for the benefit of the people, they are not despotic, there is freedom of speech, taxation is fixed, there is "security of life and property", and an enormous expansion in trade.[303]

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298 Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, 1884; Dosabhai Framji Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan and Co, 1884).
299 Dosabhai Framji Karaka, *The British Raj Contrasted with Its Predecessors.* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1858).
300 Karaka, 10.
301 Karaka, 33.
302 Karaka, 10–12.
303 The faults he identifies are the behaviour of the police. See Karaka, 37–44.

Moreover, for Karaka the contemporary analysis of some Indians was incorrect due to a lack of historical understanding. Indians sympathetic to or involved in the uprising suggested that the ammunition provided to Hindu and Muslim soldiers employed by the Company was greased in pork and cow fat offending the religious sensibilities of both Hindus and Muslims. For Karaka, however, British rule had advanced religious freedom relative to earlier Indian rulers. Importantly, the opponents of British rule were misguided as they had not studied history and did not know "of the miseries in which the people in those days lived."[304] He insisted that by opening

> the pages of its history while under the Mahomedan sovereigns, we shall not be long in forming an opinion as to the nature of their government, and contrasting it with our own experience of the British.[305]

Karaka sought to enlighten his readers with a chronological narrative that began with the eleventh century Muslim invasion of India.[306] He described the instability of Muslim rule, the exclusion of non-Muslims from government, the absence of liberty, arbitrary rule, the oppressive collection of taxation, and constant warfare.[307] Karaka directly addressed Hindus by narrating the historical oppression of their religious practices and forced conversion under Muslim rule.[308]

In *The Parsees* Karaka also uses a historical and comparative argument to justify British rule. He compared the condition of the Parsis under British rule with previous governments and the fate of Zoroastrians in Iran. He sought to ingratiate the Parsis with the British by distinguishing their loyalty from that of other communities:

> Of all the natives of India the Parsees are undoubtedly the most loyal subjects of the British Government...When they compare their condition in India with that of their co-religionists in Persia, who are reduced to the most miserable state by misgovernment and persecution, they fully and rightly appreciate the blessings which they enjoy under this Government. When they see that for more than full ten centuries they had to drag on in misery and poverty under the native rulers of India, and their own enterprise

304 Karaka, 16–17.
305 Karaka, 17.
306 For a historiographical study of the Muslim invasion story see Romila Thapar, *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History* (London; New York: Verso, 2005).
307 Karaka, *The British Raj Contrasted with Its Predecessors.*, 17–25.
308 Karaka, 28–31.

> or spirit could bring them no reward; bearing all this in mind, when they reflect upon their present prosperous condition, and inquire into its causes, they find abundant reasons to pray that the Sovereignty, which the Almighty God in the wise dispensation of his Providence has been pleased to place over them, may be for ever preserved.[309]

For Karaka, the Parsis and the British had a common foe in Muslims. Historic hostility to Muslims bound Parsis to the British, much as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* bound them to Hindus. The British had conquered northern India from Muslims, and as such Muslims were their primary adversaries in that part of India. The British public were shocked by the violence of the uprising and Karaka sought an alliance with the British, in part, based on a shared enemy. Of the Muslim conquest he writes:

> History has faithfully drawn the character of the Mahomedan conquerors wherever they have appeared, and has traced their footsteps in characters of blood. Toleration in religion is unknown to the haughty, uncivilized barbarian believers in the Koran. Bigotry is the highest virtue demanded of the Mahomedan, and one which secures for him favour in the eyes of his prophet and his God, and takes him by the shortest route to a place in heaven.[310]

Yet, although the British congratulated Parsis on their acculturation of Occidental practices and for forsaking Oriental ones, the Parsis were never quite European enough. There were always shortcomings. Karaka responded by explaining these as a historical development resulting from their acculturation of Hindu practices. In a sense, for both the British and Karaka, adaptability was a blessing and a curse. Adaptability allowed Parsis to acculturate Occidental practices more recently, but in the past had led to the acculturation of Hindu ones.

Karaka revises and reinterprets the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* story of a treaty in a historical context. His narrative of their negotiation for asylum is punctuated with a commentary that frames the actions of the Parsis in a historical context. He stresses that this encounter, in which Parsis emphasise their similarities with Hindus, should not be taken as evidence that the Parsis are an "idolatrous people". To explain their approach to negotiating their admittance to India he writes:

309 Karaka, 222.
310 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 4–5.

> the first refugees of our faith in India played the part of dissemblers and that the distiches appear to have been framed, with the view of gaining the favour of the Hindoo Rajah.[311]

For Karaka, the Parsis had only two options on arrival in India: to accept the conditions of asylum offered by the Hindu king or return to their ships and become "wanderers on the face of the earth."[312] The acculturation of Hindu practices and their loyalty to the Hindu king becomes a choice of survival rather than the pact of mutual benefit that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* narrates. Karaka writes:

> The first Parsees in India had of necessity to follow certain of the Hindoo practices, in order to secure the protection, assistance, and good will of the Hindoo princes, in whose country they took refuge.[313]

Karaka uses the encounter to illustrate to a British audience the Parsis' loyalty to the sovereign and their adaptability. The encounter is reinterpreted as a metaphor for the Parsis loyalty to whomever rules. The story is no longer of a literal loyalty to Hindus but a figurative loyalty to the ruler. In effect Karaka is saying that the British can depend upon the loyalty of the Parsis because they were loyal to Hindus when they were in power and because of a shared hostility to Muslims.

311 Karaka, 13.
312 Karaka, 14.
313 Karaka, *The British Raj Contrasted with Its Predecessors.*, 274–75.

7. The print-history-human and a justification for colonial rule

Central to Karaka's historical defence of British rule was a way of thinking about the history and religion of Iran and India that developed in colonial societies. Here different parts of the colonial administration met and sought to understand the people and lands they ruled. The colonial elite produced histories in print with a structure and argument that made conquest appear benign and altruistic. These histories glorified ancient Hindu civilisation, which was understood to have fallen with Muslim conquest, only to be revived by the British. This historical understanding was not only accepted as a justification for colonial rule by some Parsis and elite Hindus, they produced histories of this type and Karaka is an exemplary case.

In this chapter and the next I seek to understand the historical thinking expressed in *The Parsees* and the process by which the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was revised. In this chapter I propose that the intersection of shifts in power with colonial rule, the shift in historiographical conventions due to colonial societies, and the remediation of Parsi history to print created a new augmented historian, print-history-karaka.[314] Karaka was augmented by established European print conventions for how a historical narrative ought to be told and a method for knowing the past. Karaka revised the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* story using these conventions to mark it as a work of history for European readers. Print was central to this colonial era historical sensibility because it augmented a person or peoples capacity to remember and transmit what happened in the past. Print changed the relationship between history as a vehicle to remember the past and human memory due to the medium's greater degrees of accessibility, reproducibility, and durability, relative to both manuscript and orality. In the next chapter I examine how Parsis learnt this sensibility in

314 In this chapter I build upon the scholarship on print and aspects of postcolonial theory such as Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*; Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin, eds., *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* (Amherst: Washington, D.C: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007); Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*; Studies of the printing press in India have narrated its development, its role in the creation of a public sphere and the development of the book. See Anant Kakba Priolkar and Joaquim Heliodoro da Cunha Rivara, *The Printing Press in India, Its Beginnings and Early Development, Being a Quatercentenary Commemoration Study of the Advent of Printing in India in 1556.* (Bombay: Marathi Samshodhana Mandala, 1958); Robin Jeffrey, *India's Newspaper Revolution: Capitalism, Politics, and the Indian-Language Press, 1977-99* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London: Reaktion, 2004); Anindita Ghosh, "An Uncertain 'Coming of the Book': Early Print Cultures in Colonial India," *Book History* 6 (January 1, 2003): 23–55; Veena Naregal, *Language, Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere: Western India Under Colonialism* (Anthem Press, 2002); Kulke devoted a section to how print transformed the Parsis Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 115–20; Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference.*

English education, responded to missionary's historical argument against Zoroastrianism with a new historical defence, and understood British conquest as a result of the unequal relationship between Indian men and women.

I claim that print-history-karaka expresses a profoundly different form of historical consciousness to script-history-bahman. The historical thinking of *The Parsees* can be summarised as a representation of the past in the past for the present. As I will show, *The Parsees* represents the past as known in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in the past for a contemporary audience. By contrast the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* represented a contemporary power relationship and Parsi life in the past for a future audience. This is because between the script-history-human and the print-history-human the audience shifted from the future to the present, the purpose of history shifted from guiding the present to knowing the past, the focus shifted from memorability to factuality, the subject of history shifted from the king to a people, and the relationship between different groups of people was understood historically within a universal framework.

7.1 Historical knowledge, colonial societies, and British rule

In order to understand the transformation in Parsi historical consciousness, we must first examine the historical sensibility expressed in colonial societies. Initially these societies were populated by members of the British colonial elite, over time elite Indians such as Parsis joined. Here a historical sensibility developed that was normative by the time Parsis such as Karaka revised their story for print. Karaka then learnt and adopted these methods and conventions in order to produce a work that would be considered historical by his contemporaries.

It is important to note that British rule itself was premised upon historical and cultural knowledge produced in print and colonial societies. From the eighteenth century the British had sought to understand how previous rulers had taxed and maintained control over the population.[315] This developed into a broader intellectual project to understand India and its myriad of communities. Institutions developed as part of this project such as the Royal Asiatic and Anthropological Societies, which were initially populated by European colonialists.

315 Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton University Press, 1996).

For Parsis, the key institution was the Literary Society of Bombay which was created in 1804 and renamed the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1821.[316] Membership was made up of the colonial elite, governors and members of the military. The Literary Society was formed "by the love of knowledge" and in the opening address the founder proclaimed:

> Knowledge is destined one day to visit the whole earth, and, in her beneficial progress, to illuminate and humanise the whole race of man.[317]

Here the study of Zoroastrianism and the first modern histories of Iran and the Parsis were written, read, and printed using a variety of historical sensibilities emanating from Europe. Over the next century 78 papers on or relating to Iran, Zoroastrianism, and the Parsis were presented.[318] Pointedly, the Asiatic Society's first volume contained a translation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*.[319]

In 1812 a member of the Society named John Malcolm (1769-1833) proposed a study of the Parsis and Zoroastrianism.[320] Malcolm illustrates the link between British rule, education, and the production of historical knowledge. He had come to India as part of the Company's military and was later sent to Iran as envoy of the British government. Malcolm was the first principal of the school that would become the University of Bombay, where Karaka was educated, and in 1827 became the Governor of Bombay.[321] In 1815 Malcolm wrote the first history of Iran, using a European sensibility, based upon a combination of sources of which the eleventh century Iranian national epic *The Shahnama* was the foremost.[322] Malcolm's history was translated into Gujarati by a Parsi and became the standard for Iranian history amongst Parsis in the nineteenth century.[323]

As the nineteenth century progressed, Parsi involvement in the Asiatic and later Anthropological societies increased, and they rose to hold senior positions. In 1839 the

316 Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *A Glimpse into the Work of the B. B. R. A. Society during the Last 100 Years, from a Parsee Point of View* (Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1905), 1.

317 The founders were William Erskine and James Mackintosh. See Mackintosh's opening address James Mackintosh, *The Miscellaneous Works of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh*, vol. 2, 1854.

318 Modi, *A Glimpse into the Work of the B. B. R. A. Society during the Last 100 Years, from a Parsee Point of View*.

319 Asiatic Society of Bombay, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*.

320 *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1877), 357.

321 Robert Eric Frykenberg, "Malcolm, Sir John (1769–1833)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17864?docPos=3.

322 John Malcolm, *The History of Persia, from the Most Early Period to the Present Time: Containing an Account of the Religion, Government, Usages, and Character of the Inhabitants of That Kingdom.* (London: J. Murray, 1815).

323 J. P. Kapadia translated it into Gujarati in 1868 "A New History of Ancient Persia," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, September 28, 1906; Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, 1884; Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, 1884.

first Parsi joined the Asiatic Society and by the 1850s two Parsis had delivered papers to it.[324] Parsis transitioned from being the object of the Society's inquiries to making these inquiries themselves. They adopted the mantle of the British by examining and reporting on the cultural practices and histories of various Indian communities. Parsis, including Karaka, became members of the later Anthropological Society of Mumbai.[325]

In order to understand how these societies studied Zoroastrianism and the Parsis, it is helpful briefly detail the work of Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731-1805). He is credited as the first European to systematically study Zoroastrianism.[326] In the mid-eighteenth century Duperron spent six years in Surat and Navsari studying Zoroastrianism with Parsi priests, through observation, and reading religious texts.[327] He used a comparative method to decipher the language of these texts and translated them into French, from which they were translated into German and English.[328] It is telling that Duperron's brother was a historian.[329]

A key method of Duperron and members of these societies was philology, which was integral to Parsi, European, and Indian historiography in late eighteenth and nineteenth century.[330] Philology sought to understand the historical relationship between different texts and languages, which allowed the comparative deciphering of texts in languages no longer understood. This meant historical inquiry could venture into a distant past where few records existed. The method first developed in Germany in order to understand the historical Jesus and his teachings in the language he spoke.[331] A stunning

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324 Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, 150; Karaka, *The Parsees*, 217–18.

325 These are Dosabhai Framji Karaka, K. R. Cama and Jivanji Modi. "List of Members of the Anthropological Society of Bombay," *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* i, no. 1 (1886): i.

326 Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 472–74; Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *Anquetil du Perron and Dastur Darab Surat* (Bombay: Printed at the Times of India, 1916); Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha, "A CHAPTER ON MR. K. R. CAMA'S PUBLIC SERVICES AND PRIVATE CHARACTER," in *The K.R. Cama memorial volume essays on Iranian subjects*, ed. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (Bombay: Fort printing Press, 1900), xxviii; P. P. Balsara, *Highlights of Parsi History* (Mumbai: Y. C. Z. A. Educational & Charitable Fund, 1980), 77 Also stated to me in an interview I conducted with the scholar-priest Rohinton Peer in Navsari on 15/07/2013.

327 Duperron, *Extracts from the Narrative of Anquetil Du Perron's Travels in India, Chiefly Those Concerning His Researches in the Life and Religion of Zoroaster, and in the Ceremonial and Ethical System of the Same Religion as Contained in Zend and Pehlvi Books*.

328 M. (Abraham-Hyacinthe) Anquetil-Duperron, *Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre, contenant les idées théologiques, physiques & morales de ce législateur, les cérémonies du culte religieux qu'il a établi, & plusieurs traits importans relatifs à l'ancienne histoire des Parses;* (Paris, N.M. Tilliard, 1771); Duperron, *Extracts from the Narrative of Anquetil Du Perron's Travels in India, Chiefly Those Concerning His Researches in the Life and Religion of Zoroaster, and in the Ceremonial and Ethical System of the Same Religion as Contained in Zend and Pehlvi Books*.

329 Kelley, *Fortunes of History Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga*, 58.

330 In Europe mythology and philology were intertwined endeavours of inquiry from the late 18th century. See Kelley, 62–66; Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography*, 19–68; Tucker, *Our Knowledge of the Past a Philosophy of Historiography*, 59–68; Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*.

331 Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*.

example of philology was the revelation in the late eighteenth century that Persian, Sanskrit, and many European languages were related by a common origin in antiquity.[332] This now lost language is today known as proto-Indo-European.[333] Later this idea of a common linguistic heritage was adapted to postulate a common ethnic ancestry of the speakers of these related languages, which was central for later Parsi histories.

7.2 Ethnic history and a historical structure for conquest

At this point we can start to bring together the historical sensibility of these societies with Karaka in order to further illustrate how his historical sensibility is different from Bahman's. Karaka adapted a European style ethnic national narrative in which a people are the subject of history and imagined through a common history. The subject of *The Parsees* is a nation of people who are defined by a common history. The Parsis become a race. By contrast, the subject of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a history of Zoroastrian kings in which the word Parsi is used only once and towards the end. Between the two revisions we can see how history transitioned from being a story of a king to a story of a people.

Karaka revised the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* using the historical structure of European histories written about India and Iran in order to create an alliance between Parsis and the British. Generally British historians divided Indian history into three stages: ancient Hindu, medieval Islamic, and modern British. Malcolm's history divided Iranian history into two parts, marked by the arrival of Islam.[334] What was similar to both history's was a story of a Golden Ages that ended with Muslim conquest.[335] At this point they diverge, with India in the process of a British led revival while Iran remains lost. Karaka adapts this narrative arc

332 This was by William Jones, an English judge living in Kolkata. Jones founded the Bengal Asiatic Society in Calcutta which would become the Royal Asiatic Society. See Thomas R Metcalf, *The New Cambridge History of India. III, 4, III, 4,* (Cambridge (GB): Cambridge University Press, 1994), 80–82; Said does not link both of these developments to a study of Zoroastrianism Said, *Orientalism*, 76–78; This link is nearly made in Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2001).

333 Tavakoli-Targhi argues that Jones' ideas were collaboratively produced with an Indian Muslim and was based on a mid-17th century Zoroastrian text in possession of the Parsis known as the Dabistan. See Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 23–28; Kay Khosrow Esfandiyar, *The Dabistán: Or School of Manners, Translated from the Original Persian, with Notes and Illus.*, trans. David Shea and Anthony Troyer, vol. 1 (London: Allen, 1843); Kay Khosrow Esfandiyar, *The Dabistán: Or School of Manners, Translated from the Original Persian, with Notes and Illus.*, trans. David Shea and Anthony Troyer, vol. 2 (London: Allen, 1843); Kay Khosrow Esfandiyar, *The Dabistán: Or School of Manners, Translated from the Original Persian, with Notes and Illus.*, trans. David Shea and Anthony Troyer, vol. 3 (London: Allen, 1843); For a study of the Dabistan see Aditya Behl, "Pages from the Book of Religions Encountering Difference in Mughal India," in *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500-1800*, ed. Sheldon I Pollock (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 210–39.

334 Malcolm, *The History of Persia, from the Most Early Period to the Present Time*, vii.

335 Tavakoli-Targhi, "Contested Memories of Pre-Islamic Iran"; M. Reza Pirbhai, "Demons in Hindutva: Writing a Theology for Hindu Nationalism," *Modern Intellectual History* 5, no. 01 (2008): 27–53; Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism a Reader*.

beginning with a golden age, a fall with Islam, and resurrection. Karaka tells their story chronologically, introducing Parsis in the first line as the

> remnant of that mighty and flourishing race of people who inhabited Persia centuries before the Christian era.[336]

He continues to the conquest of Iran and the suppression of Zoroastrianism, writing:

> Toleration in religion is unknown to the haughty, uncivilized barbarian believers in the Koran. Bigotry is the highest virtue demanded of the Mahomedan.[337]

Karaka uses history to establish the Parsis as a distinct "race" in India who form a "striking exception" to other "Oriental nations", such that the Parsis are more similar to the British than Hindus or Muslims.[338] Just as the British are imagined as having a historical role to revive Indian civilisation, so to the Parsis are imagined as fulfilling a historical mission to revive and bring modernity to Iran.[339] This narrative structure uses the past to legitimise contemporary colonial rule by creating a shared historical bond between Parsis and the British against what were perceived as their mutual antagonists, Muslims.

This historical structure is distinct from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. Although *The Parsees* follows a similar chronological account of events as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, the three part Zoroastrian cyclical narrative structure is no longer apparent. For Karaka, history leads to European civilisation, it is teleological. The historical structure is no longer a cyclical rise and fall of Zoroastrian dynasties, but a Golden Age, a fall, and a revival that is similar to a Christian historical narrative of a Garden of Eden, a fall, and resurrection.

7.3 Questioning the existence of historical consciousness in India and Iran

The histories produced by Parsis, and the Literary and Asiatic societies were a response to a claim that Indians and Iranians did not possess historical consciousness.[340] In this view, prior to colonisation Indians and Iranians did not express an awareness of events in the past that were verifiable or an understanding of how the present came to be. Europeans

336 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 1.
337 Karaka, 5–6.
338 Karaka, x–xi.
339 Ringer, *Pious Citizens*.
340 The existence of historical consciousness in pre-colonial India is a matter of scholarly dispute. Nationalist historians led by Romila Thapar have argued in favour of the existence of a form of historical consciousness in ancient India. See Thapar, *The Past before Us*; Romila Thapar, *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History* (Oxford University Press New Delhi, 2000); Lal, *The History of History*; Conversely Postcolonial scholars Ashis Nandy and Vinay Lal have celebrated its absence valourising a mythic mode of narrating the past. See Nandy, "History's Forgotten Doubles."

sought to fill the perceived vacuum with histories of India and Iran. For instance, the Scottish political philosopher James Mill justified his composition of *The History of British India* on the difficulty of acquiring knowledge about India. He wrote that the existing works were scattered and

> a body of statements, given indiscriminately as matters of fact, ascertained by the senses, the far greater part was in general only matter of opinion, borrowed, in succession, by one set of Indian gentleman from another.[341]

Mill's history justified conquest on the basis that the British were more advanced. While for Mill Indian civilisation was irredeemable, Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779-1859) wrote a counter history that glorified ancient Hindus.[342] Elphinstone was a Governor of Bombay, a key player in the development of English education, and is widely eulogised by Parsis to this day. He accepted the view that Hindus lacked historical consciousness but took it as a point of intrigue writing:

> As the rudest nations are seldom destitute of some book account of the transactions of their ancestors, it is a natural subject of surprise, that the Hindus should have attained to a high pitch of civilisation, without any work that at all approaches to the character of a history.[343]

Nevertheless, Elphinstone's history also justified conquest because Hindu civilisation had fallen and it was the task of the British to raise it once more. It is worthwhile reflecting that histories glorying and denigrating Hindus both justified conquest.

The rebuke for Mughal and Muslim historians, such as Abul-Fazl and Badauni of Akbar's court who featured in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* chapters was different, they were simply annalists who chronicled events.[344] In his history of Iran Malcolm wrote that "the best Mahomedan authors are only good annalists."[345] For Europeans the problem with Islamic

341 Mill, *The History of British India*, 1:i–ii; For a brief reading of Mill see Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 31–33.
342 Michael Gottlob, *Historical Thinking in South Asia: A Handbook of Sources from Colonial Times to the Present* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).
343 Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India*, ed. Edward Colebrooke, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1843), 19.
344 Alex Padamsee, *Representations of Indian Muslims in British Colonial Discourse* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
345 Malcolm, *The History of Persia, from the Most Early Period to the Present Time*, 145.

historiography was that it was chronological rather than thematic.[346] Muslims sought neither lessons from the past nor an understanding of historical change.[347]

Karaka and Parsi histories were a historiographical response to a historiographical claim that they were ahistorical. In part Karaka based his account on the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* writing:

> Whatever information is now in our possession, and is to any extent reliable, is gleaned from a work entitled Kissah-i-Sanjan, which was compiled in the year 1599, by one Behram a Zoroastrian resident of Nowsaree, from the traditions extant in his time.[348]

However, for Karaka the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was problematic, prompting him to refashion Parsi history using the conventions of the time. He writes:

> Various meagre and unsatisfactory traditions exist concerning the tide of emigration, the manner in which it was effected, and the total number of those who left the shores of the Gulf.[349]

This is quite different from the historical thinking expressed in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in which the question of historical consciousness or its absence did not exist.

7.4 Universal stadial history and the validation of the British mission

Tied to the claim of historical consciousness was a conception of universal history and stadial development. Parsis responded to the claim of being ahistorical by locating events and people in universal time. Universal history incorporated all humanity that was known to Europeans into a global account of historical change. In this schema all societies progressed through the same stages towards the same endpoint. Europeans and then Indians argued the absence of historical consciousness was because Indians were at an earlier stage.[350] Historical consciousness became a marker of the highest stage, modernity;

346 Captain Vans Kennedy, "An Essay on Persian Literature," in *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, vol. 2 (Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1877), 67; Henry Beveridge and J. B. Katz, "Kennedy, Vans (1783–1846)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lawrence Goldman, H. C. G. Matthew, and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15394.

347 Henry Miers Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India: As Told by Its Own Historians. The Muhammadan Period*, vol. 1 (London: Trübner & Co, 1867), xviii–xix.

348 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 7.

349 Karaka, 7.

350 For example Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 180.

European style historical thinking was a sign of being modern.[351] From Adam Smith to Hegel and Karl Marx a stadial view of history understood Europe as further along this continuum of historical development. India and Iran belonged to earlier stages thus the future of India was Europe and Europe's past was India. In other words, people living at the same point in time existed in different historical epochs. Chakrabarty argues that stadial history legitimised colonial rule by making it appear altruistic and inevitable.[352] Parsis and elite Hindus in the nineteenth century accepted that the British were engaged in a civilising mission in order to bring India into the modern era.[353]

Central to universal history was a periodisation of Western history into the stages of ancient, medieval, and modern, which was first coined in the sixteenth century.[354] During the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century these stages were transformed into four: hunting, grazing, agriculture, and commerce.[355] At this time universal history was the most popular genre of history writing in Europe. For instance, in England a 38 volume work entitled *An Universal history: from the earliest accounts to the present time* sought to narrate the history of the world.[356] Broadly, universal and stadial history was tied to European expansion. With Columbus' journey to the Americas the discovery of peoples that did not fit within an existing Christian history provoked a new type of history to incorporate peoples not mentioned in the Bible or known to Europeans.[357]

Karaka expresses a universal stadial sensibility and this is different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. Karaka's national history locates the Parsis in a universal history and by so doing adds more material to a history of the world's nations. Humanity was compartmentalised into nations, which are constituted and understood historically. Universal history purports to represent the past of all peoples. This is different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, which is not conceived as part of a universal history, but is an account of Zoroastrian kings. The poem narrates a Zoroastrian past and their encounters with various peoples. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* remediation of a single oral Parsi source meant it was impossible to incorporate other people's histories into a universal account.

351 Nicholas B. Dirks, "History as a Sign of the Modern," *Public Culture* 2, no. 2 (March 20, 1990): 25–32.
352 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 6–7.
353 For example Rammohun Roy and Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. Chakrabarty, 32; David Williams, "Adam Smith and Colonialism," *Journal of International Political Theory* 10, no. 3 (October 1, 2014): 283–301.
354 Johannes Sleidanus Kelley, *Fortunes of History Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga*, 16.
355 For example Turgot, Goguet, Adam Smith Kelley, 36.
356 George Sale et al., *An Universal History: From the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time* (London: Printed for C. Bathurst, 1779).
357 Gottlob, *Historical Thinking in South Asia*, 4.

In order to temporally locate disparate events and people relative to each other, a universal system for time needs to be established. Dates are important in *The Parsees* but are unimportant in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. The title pages of Karaka's histories contain the date of their composition in the Christian calendar. The dates prior to the British arrival are approximate, in which the smallest units are centuries. It is striking to note that Karaka has abandoned the Zoroastrian calendar used in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in favour of a Christian one, which is accepted without question. Karaka states that the conquest by Muslims was in "the middle of the seventh century of the Christian era"[358]. Describing the Parsi in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* who organised the return of the Iranshah to Navsari he writes:

> Parsee tradition says, that there lived in the middle of the sixteenth century at Nowsaree, a Zoroastrian named Maneksha, who was reputed to be very wealthy and who maintained a princely state.[359]

The only exceptions are the date of their arrival in India which he gives as "about the year A.D. 717"[360] and the 1599 composition of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*.[361] Following the arrival of the British he begins using exact dates. Thus, in 1668 the British acquired Mumbai or in 1735 the Mumbai dockyard was founded by a Parsi.[362] By contrast, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* has a single date, that of its composition, and events are located relative to each other rather than a Christian calendar.

7.5 The print augmented historian and authorial authority for a contemporary audience

At this point it is helpful to introduce the economy of print as I argue it is central to universal stadial history and *The Parsees* historical sensibility. In order to understand how print acted to transform Parsi historical consciousness, we must briefly examine the reproducibility, accessibility, and durability of the medium both as a source and for narrative. This is because the varying combinations of these qualities in different media augment our memory in distinct ways and transform how the past can be known and transmitted through time. The result is different types of historically aware humans and

358 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 3.
359 Karaka, 23.
360 Karaka, 10.
361 Karaka, 7.
362 Karaka, 25,28.

forms of historical consciousness. In part, it is these three qualities that make the print-history-human different from the script-history-human and the oral-history-human.[363]

Broadly, the reproducibility, accessibility, and durability of both print historical narratives and sources is greater than that of manuscript or orality. Reproducibility is greater than manuscript or orality because the print process produces identical copies of the same text. By contrast an oral story changes as one person retells it to the next and with manuscript copyists make errors. The accessibility of print is far greater because more identical text could be produced and therefore a larger distribution compared to a scribe copying an existing manuscript or one person orally telling a story to another. Durability is also greater than orality but similar to manuscript as both print and manuscript sources can persist through time with minimal human intervention.

The accessibility, reproducibility, and durability of print augmented our capacity to remember the past, which meant the past was no longer so precarious. With print, the past no longer needed to be actively remembered and retold for the future. Print augmented memory and created a different relationship between history and memory compared to orality or manuscript. By contrast an oral tradition uses mnemonic strategies to guard against the medium's low degree of reproducibility and durability. Manuscript was more durable than orality insofar as it could pass through time with less human intervention but there were few copies and therefore a low degree of accessibility. The destruction of one collection of manuscripts could mark the loss of their knowledge. Oral and manuscript culture seek to guard against the loss of knowledge in a way that is not necessary for print. For print the impulse to preserve a precarious past is not as pressing when there is a vast quantity of accessible cheap copies distributed over various locations.

Returning to universal history, the use of print produced a theorising of a historical relationship between people who are contemporary. This resulted from the high degree of reproducibility and accessibility of print which meant one person could have

363 For a history of the printing press and the various debates see Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*; Eisenstein, "Clio and Chronos an Essay on the Making and Breaking of History-Book Time"; Briggs and Burke, *A Social History of the Media*; Jill A. Friedman and Roger Chartier, "Gutenberg Revisited from the East," *Late Imperial China* 17, no. 1 (1996): 1–9; Kai-Wing Chow, "Reinventing Gutenberg: Woodblock and Moveable-Type Printing in Europe and China," in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: Washington, D.C: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 169–92; Priolkar and Rivara, *The Printing Press in India, Its Beginnings and Early Development, Being a Quatercentenary Commemoration Study of the Advent of Printing in India in 1556.*; Swapan Chakravorty et al., *Print Areas: Book History in India* (Delhi; Bangalore: Permanent Black ; Distributed by Orient Longman, 2004); Ghosh, "An Uncertain 'Coming of the Book'"; Isabel Hofmeyr, *Gandhi's Printing Press Experiments in Slow Reading* (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013); Pinney, *Photos of the Gods*; Robin Jeffrey, *Media and Modernity: Communications, Women, and the State in India*, 2010.

access to a vast quantity of histories about different peoples. The process of bringing together histories allowed a historian to place different peoples on a continuum of development. The historian or political philosopher could then postulate that contemporary people exist at different stages of historical development.

Print is also central to comparative historiography and a history of history. With print a single historian had access to a vast amount of other histories about the same event they were researching. Mass production of identically reproduced texts meant the standardisation of individual histories and a greater capacity for a collegial commentary. Because these histories are dated a historian could see the chronological development and causal relationship between different ways of thinking. Print allowed one historian to build upon and engage with those who had come before. It was not only the facts of the past that became citable but the interpretation of those facts. A historian could see the change in ideas over time by the evolving interpretation of histories that dealt with the same topic. Print allowed a historian to comprehend the chronological development of thought and a developmental idea about historical change. Simply put, print created a perception of change in historical thinking and a history of history.

In the case of *The Parsees* we can see that the use of print created an audience in the present because print augmented our capacity to remember the past. Whereas the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was written for future generations of priests in order to establish the authority of Bahman's branch of the priesthood, Karaka wrote *The Parsees* for an English and Parsi audience of the present. Bahman wrote in Persian for a small future audience while Karaka wrote in English for a much larger contemporary audience. For Karaka the purpose of history was more immediate as he was not seeking to preserve the past for posterity because print augmented memory meaning that the past was no longer precarious.

Authorial authority is established by the corroborating opinions of Europeans. In a sense both *The Parsees* and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* establish their authority and the story's believability through their lineage. Yet, *The Parsees* is different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* insofar as authority to narrate the past and the believability of the account is not established by a lineage of priests but, in part, by corroborating the opinions and arguments of Europeans. For instance, Karaka supports his argument defending Zoroastrianism against Christian missionary polemics by drawing upon the scholarship of Europeans writing:

> We now quote the opinion of unprejudiced European authors as to what Parseeism truly is.[364]

Karaka then quote the first European to study the Parsis before quoting another European[365]:

> The Persians, from the beginning of their existence as a nation, always believed in only one and the same true and omnipotent God.[366]

Finally, he quotes:

> Sir John Malcolm, in his splendid work on the history of Persia, acknowledges that the reproachful name of fire-worshippers is not merited by the Parsees.[367]

Karaka draws upon the arguments of European scholars covering the link between ancient Sanskrit and Avestan, respectively the languages of the oldest Hindu and Zoroastrian texts. He disputes that Avestan is a dialect of Sanskrit on the basis of the position taken by certain Europeans against other Europeans.[368] Thus for Karaka his authority and the believability of his account is, in part, established by the deployment of European scholarly conventions for a contemporary British audience.

The shift to corroboration for establishing authority can be explained by the augmentation of print. Karaka had at his disposal numerous other historical accounts of Iran, Zoroastrianism, and the Parsis due to the accessibility of earlier print histories.[369] He could engage in a process of comparing the arguments of different Europeans because these sources were identically reproduced copies. Such a method would have been difficult for Bahman given the more limited quantity of sources as his disposal.[370]

Karaka established his authority using an evidence based argument to understand historical change in which the purpose of history was to know the past. Again, the accessibility of print meant he could read different sources against each other in order to posit an argument explaining how change over time occurred. Karaka sought to differentiate his work by emphasising the uniqueness of his historical argument that Parsis

364 Karaka, *The British Raj Contrasted with Its Predecessors.*, 252.
365 The first is Anquetil-Duperron and the second Dr Hyde.
366 Karaka, *The British Raj Contrasted with Its Predecessors.*, 255.
367 Karaka, 262.
368 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 241–42.
369 We know this because he cited them in text.
370 Although we have no way of knowing the quantity of sources Bahman had, we can surmise that it would have been less given that there are no other historical historical accounts prior to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*.

were loyal to the British. This is different from the oral tradition and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, which sought to move the reader and listener through poetic flourishes using a Zoroastrian sensibility rather than an argument.

An evidence based history transformed the narrative structure from chronological to thematic. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* Indo-Persian historiographical chronology encapsulated a cyclical Zoroastrian sensibility in which the world moved through cycles of creation, mixture, and resolution. By contrast *The Parsees* is organised thematically because the themes build his historical argument that Parsis are loyal to the British. Karaka's thematic structure subsumed a chronological story. While the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* has no chapters, *The Parsees* has eight that are thematic:

1. Historical sketch
2. The Parsees in Persia
3. Manners and customs
4. Laws and internal governance of the Parsees
5. Commercial pursuits
6. Education
7. Religion
8. Conclusion

The shift to a thematic structure is possible because print augmented memory, which meant the past did not need to be actively remembered and retold by individuals. Print history is so accessible, reproducible, and durable there is not the same imperative to use mnemonic oral strategies because print remembers.[371] As I previously discussed, Bahman created a sense of immediacy with the oral tradition, which meant he remediated oral mnemonic strategies such as verse and a cyclical historical structure. But for Karaka memory was not important and he was not seeking to create a sense of immediacy with the oral tradition.

The Parsees revises the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in order to mark it as a work of history for a contemporary audience by using European conventions for how a printed book history ought to appear. *The Parsees* and most Parsi print histories are bound with a cover followed by a title page with the author's name, where they were printed, and the date. The author

371 Although Ghosh argues that there was a continuity between the format and genres used in manuscript and printed books, I would suggest this is due to the sense of immediacy the medium is seeking to create. Ghosh, "An Uncertain 'Coming of the Book,'" 36.

lists their previous works and a preface justifies the publication of the work. In *The Parsees* there are contents pages near the start, indexes at the end that allow the locating of events, people, and themes on the numbered pages, and Karaka cites other works in-text. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* by contrast has no title, or title page, the name of the author is embedded in the text, there are no chapters, contents page or index, pages are not numbered, and Bahman only acknowledges the priest who told him the story.

Critical to book history is the use of prose rather than verse. We can also understand the difference in narrative form between the verse *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and *The Parsees'* prose, by the sense of immediacy each medium sought to create. *The Parsees* sought to create a sense of immediacy with the manuscript *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and print histories created by Europeans, whereas with the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* sought to create a sense of immediacy with the oral tradition. In a sense, the first time a history is told in a new medium it will encapsulate the earlier medium as its own content. But as the new medium becomes established, the need for these strategies disappears. We can see this process in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* use of verse and *The Parsees* use of prose. *The Parsees* sought to create a sense of immediacy with both the verse *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and British produced printed prose histories. The shift from verse to prose was also because mnemonic strategies were no longer required with print.

7.6 Representing the past and a sense of distance

Significantly, in *The Parsees* we can see a shift to an allegorical representation of the past in the past from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* represented the present in the past. Pointedly, due to remediation *The Parsees* represents the past as it was known in 1599 in the past. This is because as the first print remediation of a manuscript, *The Parsees* sought to create a sense of immediacy with the manuscript and reproduce the past as it was known at that time. Yet the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was creating a sense of immediacy with the oral tradition which represented the present in the past. Hence, because the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* represents Parsi life as it was in 1599, *The Parsees* also represents Parsi life in 1599 as if it were all of Parsi history.

A representation of the past in the past was made possible by a sense of historical distance. For the reader and researcher this is a conception of distance in time between them and the narrated events or people. The print-history-human employs strategies to create a sense of distance and circumvent our intuitive understanding of time. Our intuitive comprehension of time is short, limited to no more than a century, or three to

four generations. Our most personal experience of history is our grandparents and great-grandparents whose stories and ways of seeing the world give us a glimpse of a past era. The incongruity between how they view the world and our own perspective gives a sense of historical change. But transporting ourselves further back in time requires an act of mental levity on the part of the researcher, narrator, and viewer.

Scholars have argued that one of the innovations of European historiography is a sense of the foreignness of the past, as captured by the well-worn phrase: the past is a foreign country. This is created by methodological and narrative strategies to produce highly detailed and long accounts that allow a reader to perceive the strangeness of the past relative to our own experience and hence create a sense of temporal or historical distance. This is a mediated immersion in which we time travel into the past yet allows us to comprehend difference and historical distance when we mentally return to our present. This is distance through special kind of historical immersion that is counterintuitive.[372]

As I discussed in the third chapter, for Hayden White and those who followed the literary turn in historical studies, it is this imaginative act of time travel, of bringing the past to life through allegory, which undermines the claim of history to be a scientific endeavour that can represent the past as it was. However, White only examined the claim of nineteenth century history in isolation.[373] I would suggest the capacity of print history to know and represent the past needs to be understood in relation to other media, eras, and historiographical traditions. We get a very different sense of the strangeness of the past from a short oral history that covers vast stretches of time than we do with a long print book that seeks to recreate a moment in time centuries ago. Although the claim of European historical thinking to represent the past in the past for a contemporary audience is not completely defensible, the print-history-human represents the past for the present to a far greater degree than the oral-history-human or the script-history-human.

The print-history-human has a set of methodological and narrative strategies to produce highly detailed and long accounts that allow a reader to perceive the strangeness of the past relative to our own experience and hence create a sense of temporal or historical distance. There are various strategies range from dating events and people, quotations, the length of the text, causation, and a thematic narrative structure that

372 Kemp, *The Estrangement of the Past*; Zachary Schiffman, *The Birth of the Past* (JHU Press, 2011); Attwood, "In the Age of Testimony: The Stolen Generations Narrative, 'Distance' and Public History"; David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country - Revisited*, 2016.

373 White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory"; Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (October 1, 1980): 5–27; White, *Metahistory*.

transport the reader into the past. While this sensibility developed in the particular historical circumstances in Europe, it appears to me more generally that distance is intimately tied to the augmentation with print. This meant a historian could create a historical narrative that imaginatively transported the reader back into the strangeness of the past and hence create a perception of historical distance from the present. The historian could imaginatively recreate the detail of the past because of the accessibility of information in multiple sources.

Distance is also created by a longer text in which the minutiae of events can be explicated and the reader transported into the past. The slow movement of the story through time allows one to comprehend distance, in part, because the increased effort of comprehending a book creates a sense of immersion in the past. *The Parsees* is far longer with 72251 words compared to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* 5494 words. However, it should be noted that the historical section of *The Parsees* is only 10577 words with the rest of the book explaining contemporary Parsi practices. I would suggest that this is the echo of the oral tradition as Karaka sought to create a sense of immediacy with the manuscript poem which in turn sought to create a sense of immediacy with an oral version of the story. In chapter ten I will expand upon how print creates an even greater sense of distance in the case of the next revision studied.

Thus, in summary the historical consciousness expressed by Karaka is different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* due in large part to the adaptation of European conventions and the augmentation of memory with print. The historical consciousness expressed in *The Parsees* can be summarised as a representation of the past as it was known in 1599 in the past for the present. By contrast the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* represents the present in the past for a future audience. We can then state that the action to create *The Parsees* was an augmented historian created in the space between Karaka, shifts in power with the challenge to colonial rule, new European historiographical conventions, and the use of print. This agent is a print-history-human, or in this case print-history-karaka. In the next chapter I will build upon this chapter's analysis by examining the process by which Parsis adapted a European historiographical sensibility.

8. Learning new historical methods and the Christian missionary challenge

In 1829 a Scottish missionary named John Wilson (1804-1875) arrived in Mumbai. Wilson's proselytising was part of a process that transformed the historical consciousness of Parsis. He exemplifies the link between historical thinking, missionary activity, education, colonial rule, and the Asiatic Society. Wilson's membership in the Asiatic Society was proposed a year after his arrival by Malcolm and in 1835 he became its president.[374] His missionary schools were central because ten years after arriving he succeeded in converting two of his Parsi students to Christianity. In the following months Wilson delivered a sermon using a historical argument attacking the Parsis and Zoroastrianism.[375] He began by saying:

> The history of their arrival in India, as preserved in their own documents, is meagre, obscure, and unsatisfactory.[376]

Wilson argued that the Parsis' prophet Zarathustra was not a historical person and did not exist.[377] He then quoted and cited an abridged translation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the *16 Sanskrit Slokas* portraying Zoroastrianism as a naturalistic religion.[378] He used a stadial argument that Parsis had not progressed from the earliest stages in which people worshipped light, sun, and fire; as such the Parsis were incapable of historical inquiry because their religion was static.[379] He wrote:

> The Religion of the Parsis, notwithstanding the peculiarities and absurdities with which it is now associated, is substantially the same, in its general principles, at the present day, that it was in the ages of antiquity.[380]

374 Malcolm wrote the first English history of Iran and, as colonial governor was integral to the development of English education. Until 1813 the East India Company prohibited Christian missionaries from proselytising in India but under pressure from British Christians, the British government forced the company to lift this prohibition. George Smith, *The Life of John Wilson, D. D., F. R. S.: For Fifty Years Philanthropist and Scholar in the East* (London: J. Murray, 1878), 316.

375 The sermon was later published.

376 John Wilson, *The Doctrine of Jehovah Addressed to the Pársís: A Sermon*, 1839, 1.

377 John Wilson, *Lecture on the Vendidad Sade of the Parsis, Delivered at Bombay on the 19th and 26th June, 1833 ... Second Edition.* (Pp. 48. American Mission Press: Bombay, 1833), 6–7.

378 Wilson also had the Qesse-ye Sanjantranslated into English in order to refute it. See Eastwick's translation in Asiatic Society of Bombay, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay.

379 Wilson, *The Doctrine of Jehovah Addressed to the Pársís*, 34.

380 John Wilson, *The Pársí Religion: As Contained in the Zand-Avastá, and Propounded and Defended by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, Unfolded, Refuted, and Contrasted with Christianity* (Bombay, American Mission Press, 1843), 5; The dissertations of Susan Styles Maneck and Daniel Sheffield challenge the argument that Zoroastrianism was static. Maneck argues that the dualism that characterised the final Zoroastrian Empire of the Sasanians gave way to monotheism during the prolonged engagement with Islam. See Maneck, *The Death of Ahriman: Culture Identity and Theological Change Among the Parsis of India*; Sheffield argues that under the influence of Islamic prophetology Zarathustra became a prophet. See Sheffield,

Wilson's conversion of the two boys spurred Parsis to transform their understanding of Zoroastrianism. In the following year Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the wealthy anglicised Parsi merchant, commissioned a Parsi priest to produce a book that would equip Parsis with arguments to defend their religion.[381] From 1842 Parsis produced a monthly magazine that understood the problem as stemming from the lack of education amongst their priests. The priests were criticised on the grounds that they were only ritualists reciting prayers and they were incapable of engaging in a sophisticated religious exegeses because they did not understand the language of their texts.[382]

It was a group of Parsi reformers who managed to refute Wilson's polemics and defend their religion by adapting the same historical methods to understand Zarathustra that Christians used to understand Jesus. Parsis sought corroborating evidence to support the existence of Zarathustra and to understand Zoroastrianism as a historical development. The reformers sought to recover an authentic and original Zoroastrianism using philology. They argued that the essence of Zarathustra's teachings had become corrupted through contact with non-Zoroastrians, particularly Hindus. In a sense, the reformers defended Zoroastrianism by becoming a bit like modern Christians. The reformers transformed the study of Zoroastrianism to such an extent that they were later derided as "Protestant Zoroastrians".[383]

Parsis learnt and adapted these methods in English education and by creating their own educational institutions. In 1851 a seminary was created to educate their priests and amongst its alumni were two key participants who feature in the following chapters' debates over the historical accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, Pahalanaji Barajoraji Desai and Jivanji Modi.[384] It was Modi who co-authored the third revision that I will examine, *The*

"In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India."

381 Wilson, *The Pársí Religion*, 9.

382 See for example Dadabhai Naoroji, *The Parsee Religion* (n.p.: n.p., 1861), 1; Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 95.

383 That it was Wilson's proselytising that provoked this response is discussed in Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, ed., *The K.R. Cama memorial volume essays on Iranian subjects* (Bombay: Fort printing Press, 1900), 181; The Parsi historian R. P. Karkaria, referring to Wilson, said "This work, which mercilessly exposed the weak points of the popular system believed in by the laity and the clergy in their ignorance, was really epoch-making, not only for its scholarship - it was the first European book based on a first-hand knowledge of Parsi sacred language and books - but for the effect it has had on our religion itself, which it helped materially to purify. It put Parsis on their mettle. Numerous were the criticisms and replies, mostly ignorant and some downright stupid. In a few years sensible Parsis set to work to put their house in order, so to say" John Nicol Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (New York: The Macmillan, 1915), 84; Protestant Zoroastrians is cited in Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 501; Although from a Christian perspective Wilson's challenge was largely unsuccessful; from 1839 to 1900 only fifteen Parsis converted. See Sheffield, "In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India," 153.

384 This is the Mulla Feroze Madressa.

Early History of the Parsees.[385] In English education Parsi reformers, including Karaka, coalesced around a liberal vision of a European civilising mission.[386] They understood colonisation as a result of Indian cultural practices such as child marriage and inequality between men and women. These practices were understood as a marker of India's place behind Europe in a universal model in which all societies developed through the same stages. Karaka and other reformers argued Europe conquered India and was more developed because of its social practices and historical awareness.

8.1 English education and the historical defence of Zoroastrianism

To understand the reformers, we must examine the place where they met and learnt their methods: English education. In 1822 English education began in Mumbai with the creation of the Bombay Education Society with the Governor of Bombay, Elphinstone, as its president. It would splinter into the Bombay Native Education Society, and then become the first Elphinstone School then College, and finally the University of Bombay in 1857. Malcolm, who wrote the first history of Iran, was the president of the Elphinstone School in its first year and went on to become the next governor of Mumbai. The school taught history, geography, and popular sciences. Although the medium of instruction was English, it was a condition of these early schools that the students had to first be proficient in Marathi or Gujarati.[387]

The fear of Christian proselytising motivated the Parsi community to influence colonial education and create their own educational institutions. Although the majority of pupils in the early schools were Parsis and their money was integral, English education was

385 Sapur Faredun Desai, *History of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet* (Bombay: Bombay Trustees of the Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties, 1977), 70.

386 For a study of liberalism and empire see Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Duncan Bell, "John Stuart Mill on Colonies," *Political Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1, 2010): 34–64; Beate Jahn, "Barbarian Thoughts: Imperialism in the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 03 (July 2005): 599–618.

387 Zenobia E Shroff, *The Contribution of Parsis to Education in Bombay City, 1820-1920* (Mumbai: Himalaya Pub. House, 2001); Aparna Basu, *The Growth of Education and Political Development in India, 1898-1920*. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974); Jal F Bulsara, *Mass and Adult Education in India (a Short Monograph Surveying the Social, Cultural and Literacy Conditions of the Indians and Suggesting an Outline Scheme for the Spread of Adult Education in the Country)*. (Bombay: [J.F. Bulsara], 1938); G. J. Kerawalla, "The Education Sector: Enlightened Contribution," in *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005), 616–39; Bruce Tiebout McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism*. (Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1966); "Education in Bombay," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, October 18, 1848; *Hints on Parsee Education, Present and Future: An Essay Dedicated to Cowasjee Jehanghier, ESQ* (Bombay: Exchange Press, 1862); "Manockjee Cursetjee on Education in India," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, November 9, 1865; Charles E Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India,* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1838).

controversial amongst the community.[388] Many were fearful of their children converting to Christianity, leading to a momentary split in the community. The wealthy did not want to send their children to missionary or English schools and were educated by private tutors at home. In 1841 Parsis created their own schools in response to missionary activity. That Parsis of the time embraced English education is illustrated by Karaka:

> Of all the natives of India this race has shown itself the most desirous of receiving the benefits of an English education; and their eagerness to drink the waters of the science and literature of the West has been conspicuous.[389]

Nowrojee Furdoonjee was a friend of Karaka's from university and a fellow social reformer who used a historical argument to defend Zoroastrianism. In 1851 Furdoonjee debated the British editor of the *Bombay Times* who charged that Zarathustra did not exist. Furdoonjee went on to write a book that used corroborating sources to argue that Zarathustra was a historical figure.[390] Furdoonjee flipped Wilson's argument to disprove the existence of a historical Jesus.[391] Orthodox Parsis, however, opposed Furdoonjee's exposition on the grounds that it opened Zoroastrianism to attacks from its enemies.[392]

8.2 An Indian society for learning European methods

Central to the transformation in their historical sensibility was the Students' Literary and Scientific Society at Elphinstone College. It was created in 1848 by two English Professors. Here Karaka and Furdoonjee came together with two Parsis who would transform India and Zoroastrianism. The first was Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917), who was integral to social reform and the development of what would become the Indian independence

388 Shroff, *The Contribution of Parsis to Education in Bombay City, 1820-1920*, 16-9,21-8; S. R Dongerkery, *A History of the University of Bombay, 1857-1957*. ([Bombay: University of Bombay, 1957), 1–2.

389 Karaka, *The British Raj Contrasted with Its Predecessors.*, 187.

390 This is Furdoonjee's 1851 Tareek-i-Zurtoshtee; or, Discussion on the Era of Zurtosht or Zoroaster. See Karaka, *The Parsees*, 237.

391 Sheffield, "In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India," 156–58.

392 The orthodox were represented by the newspaper Jam-e-Jamshed. See "Editorial Article 10 -- No Title," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, February 22, 1851; Nowrozjee Furdoonjee, "On the Era and Existence of Zoroaster, and the Genuineness of the Pehlivi and Zend Books," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, May 24, 1851; Nowrozjee Furdoonjee, "On the Genuineness and Authenticity of the Pehlivi Works," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, May 21, 1851; Nowrozjee Furdoonjee, "Correspondence: To the Editor of the Bombay Times on the Existence of Zoroaster and the Genuineness and Antiquity of the Zend and Pehlivi Works," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, May 10, 1851; Nowrozjee Furdoonjee, "Correspondence: To the Editor of the Bombay Times on the Existence and Era of Zoroaster," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, April 26, 1851; "Correspondence: To the Editor of the Bombay Times," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, June 11, 1851; COWASJEE SORADJER PATELL, "Correspondence: To the Editor, of the Bombay Times the Zoroastrian Era," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, August 13, 1851.

movement. He will feature prominently in the next chapter. The second was Kharshedji Rustamji Cama (1831-1909) who was the first Parsi to use European methods to understand Zoroastrianism. Cama's pupils produced the next revision studied; they also debated the accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, building upon his and Karaka's historical sensibility. The society was the meeting point for the future leaders who would transform the community. At first the society was unpopular amongst Parsis, but within a generation it would be celebrated.[393]

The society created a public space for a structured debate premised upon rational arguments. That is a modern understanding of the world using scientific methods. The founder wrote:

> the business of the new Society should be conducted by the reading of Essays on literary, scientific, and social subjects; and by discussing the topics introduced in a conversational manner.[394]

Three vernacular branches were established:

> to promote the diffusion of knowledge among the uneducated masses, by the reading and discussing of Essays on literary, historical, and social subjects; by Lectures on physical and chemical science, accompanied by experiments; and by the publication of a cheap monthly literary periodical suited to the requirements and tastes of the people.[395]

Social reform and the conditions of women in India were key agenda items of the society. Monthly vernacular magazines were published containing essays; the first example given in the society's report is an "Essay on the ancient History of Persia".[396] A paper was presented on the connection between Sanskrit and Persian.[397] A favourite theme of the essays was "The unhappy results of early marriages" and the titles of some of the papers read were: "Re-marriage of Hindu Widows", "Female Education in India", "Condition of Women in India", and "The Condition of Hindu Women".[398] Papers on history were read

393 Students' Literary and Scientific Society (Bombay India), *Proceedings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, Bombay, for the Years 1854-55 and 1855-56* (s.n., 1856), vi–vii, 17; C.M.C., *A Short History of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution, Founded by Manockjee Cursetjee, 1863* (Bombay, 1913).

394 Students' Literary and Scientific Society (Bombay India), *Proceedings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, Bombay, for the Years 1854-55 and 1855-56*, 5.

395 Students' Literary and Scientific Society (Bombay India), 5–6.

396 Students' Literary and Scientific Society (Bombay India), 7.

397 Students' Literary and Scientific Society (Bombay India), *Proceedings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, Bombay during 1856-57, 1857-58 and 1858-59* (Printed at the "Bombay Gazette" Press, 1860), 3, http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:3206931.

398 Students' Literary and Scientific Society (Bombay India), *Proceedings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, Bombay, for the Years 1854-55 and 1855-56*, 6.

such as "The Natural History of Man" and "Praises of History".[399] For the reformers, education and social reform were linked together. According to Naoroji, childhood marriage forced men to work early depriving them of the time required to gain a full education.[400]

The society's agenda was publicised by liberal reformist newspapers such as *Rast Goftar,* or *The Herald of the Truth,* which was created by Naoroji in 1851. The paper spearheaded social reforms advancing the cause of female education, the free public association of men and women, widow remarriage, and the abolition of child marriage.[401] The paper was founded as a mouthpiece for liberalism by Naoroji following riots between Parsis and Muslims. The riots were triggered by the publication of a sketch of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad in a monthly biographical journal edited by a Parsi. The peak governing body of the community, the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, called upon the editor to pulp the remaining copies of the journal and apologise. Naoroji was incensed at the craven response of the Panchayat and its failure to defend free speech.[402]

8.3 Women's status as a marker of historical development

For Parsi men, the social reform agenda of the society, and particularly the status of women, was entwined with their conception of the historical relationship between Indians, Parsis, and Europeans. Karaka writes:

> A noble band of educated Parsees have within the last few years, by the publication of cheap newspapers or magazines, or by public lectures, all more or less calculated to impart information and knowledge to the mass, worked such an extraordinary change on the character of their race...We are content to say that they have fully succeeded in awakening in the minds of their countrymen the necessity of a general and rapid advancement in the path of knowledge and enlightenment, if they desire to be classed among the civilized nations of the earth.[403]

This quote illustrates how the liberal ideals of Elphinstonian reformers transformed the historical consciousness of the Parsis by adapting stadial history. Reformers viewed India

399 Students' Literary and Scientific Society (Bombay India), 34–37.
400 Dadabhai Naoroji and Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh, *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings* (Bombay, Caxton printing works, 1887), 2.
401 Mody, *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*, 168.
402 Cowasjee Nowrojee, *Notes and Reflections on the Bombay Riots, of 1874* (Bombay: Bombay Gazette Steam Press, 1874), 12.
403 Karaka, *The British Raj Contrasted with Its Predecessors.*, 214.

as being at an earlier stage of social development compared to England and one of the markers of India's earlier stage was the treatment of women. Simply put, for the reformers and the British, women in Britain had a higher status, enjoyed more freedoms, and were better educated than women in India. In order to advance India, catch up with Britain, and become modern, Parsi and Hindu practices that were not modern, such as child marriage, needed to be abolished, and women's education advanced.[404] Parsis believed that the reason they were behind Britain was the historical acculturation of Hindu practices, which resulted from their sojourn. Social reform became one of the markers of Parsi identity that distinguished them from other Indians and brought them closer to the British. We can see the centrality of developmental thinking to *The Parsees* in the final sentence of the book:

> Our task is now accomplished, and if the present work has succeeded in familiarizing Europeans with a race who are seeking to become, in one sense, Europeans themselves, the aim and end of the writer will have been realized.[405]

In part, the social reformers were responding to a European charge that the civilisational gap between Orientals and Occidentals was due to the status of women. For instance, Malcolm's *History of Persia* stated that the "general character" following Arabic conquest is to place

> a great portion of the females of the countries where Mahomedanism was introduced, in a condition little above that of slaves, and this alone perpetuated, if it did not create, an insuperable obstacle to the progress of civilization.[406]

An 1852 editorial in the *Bombay Times* linked the rights of Indians to those of women and stadial history, writing:

> When orientals clamour for what they term their rights-that is, for being placed on a footing in their own country something like that which Englishmen enjoy, they seem to forget that it is one of the best established maxims in existence that no race of men ever

404 For further reading on women and the nationalist movement see Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Partha Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (November 1, 1989): 622–33; Judith E. Walsh, "What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice: Rewriting Patriarchy in Late-Nineteenth-Century Bengal," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 56, no. 3 (1997): 641–77.

405 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 286.

406 Malcolm, *The History of Persia, from the Most Early Period to the Present Time*, 136.

> rose above the rank of barbarians who desired to retain their women in a state of ignorance and degradation[407]

Karaka adapted this historical sensibility reasoning that while Parsis were more advanced compared to Hindus and Muslims,

> the effect of English education upon the Parsees generally, will be to raise them still higher in the scale of civilization.[408]

But Parsis could not advance to the same historical stage because of the status of women. Karaka writes:

> nor could the Parsee community generally be said to have advanced in a moral or social point of view if their women remained in a semi-barbarous state.[409]

For Karaka the problem with the lack of female education was the

> influence which a mother or sister exercises upon a child.[410]

If Indian women were educated, they would raise an improved generation of Indian men. For Karaka Parsi women were closing the gap as he writes:

> Day by day they are freeing themselves from the restraints which Oriental ignorance has imposed upon them. In their domestic relations, they are almost European[411]...whenever we find woman occupying a position in which she ministers to something higher than the passions of men, it is certain that nation is on the road to civilization.[412]

The idea of women's rights was part of a discourse justifying conquest. The contrast between the experience of British and Indian women allowed the liberation movement in Britain and the conquest of India. Probably the most striking quote expressing a developmental sensibility in which women are a marker was in an 1863 book by a Parsi. He wrote:

> We want the English language, English manners and English behaviour for our wives and daughters, and until these are

407 "Editorial Article 12 -- No Title," *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce (1838-1859)*, October 16, 1852.
408 Karaka, *The Parsees*, 195.
409 Karaka, 197.
410 Karaka, 197.
411 Karaka, 183.
412 Karaka, 284.

> supplied, it is but just that the present gulf between the Englishman and the Indian should-remain as wide as ever.[413]

In many respects, these social reformers achieved their goal as the status of Parsi women was transformed. During fieldwork I interviewed Parsi women who have created influential businesses, a Parsi woman who was the former head of the University Grants Commission, and pointedly for this thesis, many of the recent Parsi historical revisions are produced by women, including the final one studied in this thesis.

8.4 Understanding Zarathustra historically

Alongside Karaka and Paymaster another Parsi emerging from the Students' Literary and Scientific Society was Cama. He would transform Zoroastrianism through a historical understanding of their religion, and epitomises the nexus between sites of colonial knowledge, social reform, English education, Parsi wealth, print, Western methods, and historical thinking. Born in 1831 to a wealthy family in Mumbai he studied at the Elphinstone College and became a social reformer pushing for women's education.[414] Wealth and trade allowed Cama to engage with Europe on his own terms.[415] He left for Europe in 1855 on a business trip with Naoroji and over four years met with and studied under a variety of European Orientalists and philologists. He learnt Avestan, Pahlavi, French, and German together with scientific and philological techniques for understanding ancient Zoroastrian texts.[416] On returning to India he was involved in the creation of a number of Parsi organisations that studied Zoroastrianism adapting methods from Europe.[417] Cama's picture is in illustration five.

413 Framji Bomanji, *Lights and Shades of the East: Or a Study of the Life of Baboo Harrischander and Passing Thoughts on India and Its People, Their Present and Future* (Bombay: Alliance Press, 1863), 94.
414 Modi, *The K.R. Cama memorial volume essays on Iranian subjects*, xliii.
415 For instance, he travelled to China at the age of nineteen on a business trip.
416 Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, *K.R. Cama* (Bombay: K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1932), i–x.
417 Zarthoshti Din-ni Karnari Mandli or the Society for Making Researches in Zoroastrian Religion.

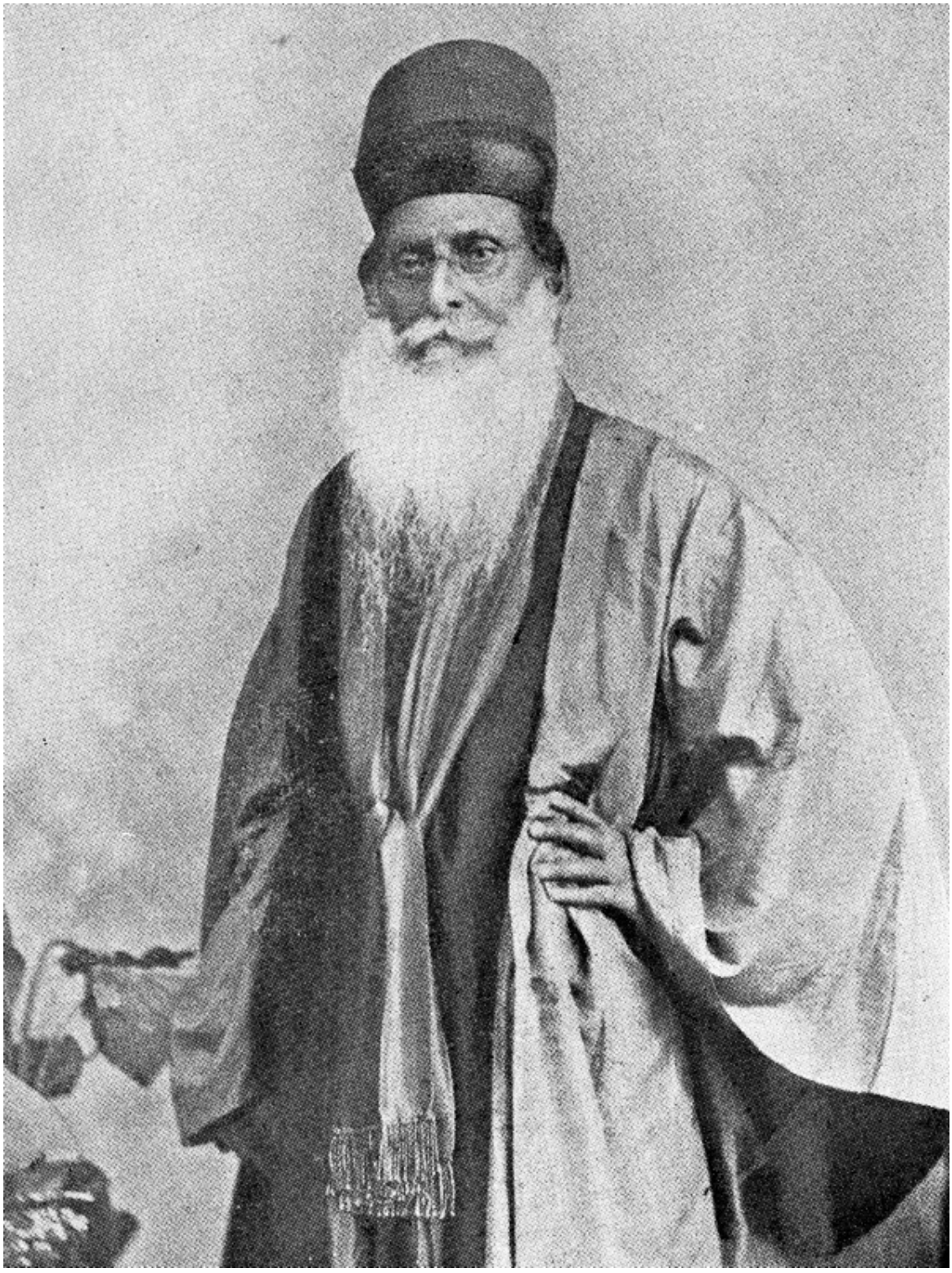

Illustration 5: *Kharshedji Rustamji Cama* in K.R. Cama, (Bombay: K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1932).

Cama is widely credited as the first Parsi to institute the use of Western methods for the study of Zoroastrianism.[418] The most popular of Cama's writings was a new *Zartosht-nama*, or the Stories of Zarathustra, in which he combined the existing oral and scriptural tradition of miracles with a philological technique in order to prove their historical truth.[419] Following Cama, a historical approach became the dominant mode by which Parsis understood Zarathustra and Zoroastrianism. He was a key participant in a number of Parsi organisations that would propagate these methods. From Cama's engagement, historical knowledge of Zoroastrianism, Parsi, and Iranian history was produced collaboratively between Europeans and Parsis at colonial institutions such as the University of Bombay and the Anthropological and Asiatic societies.[420] Cama pushed the University of Bombay to include ancient Iranian languages in the syllabus, and he was an influential member of the Asiatic Society. Cama was so successful that by 1864 the reformers use of these methods were no longer opposed by orthodox Parsis.[421]

The European crucial to this shift was another member of the Asiatic Society, a German philologist named Martin Haug (1827-1876).[422] In 1861 Cama asked Haug to become the director of a Zoroastrian seminary, which was created nearly two decades earlier to equip priests with the skills to defend their religion against Wilson.[423] In a lecture Haug presented an argument for the existence of a historical Zarathustra. His philological argument compared the ancient Hindu *Rig Veda* with the *Zend-Avesta* of the Parsis. He concluded that the Parsi scriptures were composed over time and the oldest were composed by Zarathustra himself.[424] Following the lecture, one of the Parsis who converted to Christianity in 1839 wrote to Haug, asking whether Zoroastrianism was in fact monotheistic to which Haug replied it was.[425] In the following year Haug outlined the case for the study of Zoroastrianism historically in *Essays on the sacred language, writings, and religion of the Parsis*.[426] He asserted the originality of Zoroastrianism and affirmed that the Parsis were the world's foremost adherents. Haug clad Parsis in the cloak of European scholarship, which helped defend their religion to such an extent that Cama observed:

418 Modi, *The K.R. Cama memorial volume essays on Iranian subjects*.
419 Cama, *K.R. Cama*, xxxv.
420 Modi, *A Glimpse into the Work of the B. B. R. A. Society during the Last 100 Years, from a Parsee Point of View*.
421 Modi, *The K.R. Cama memorial volume essays on Iranian subjects*, xxxvii.
422 There were a number of Europeans involved in this, including Muller, West, Spiegel. See Sheffield, "In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India."
423 Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 95.
424 These are known as the Gathas. Haug, *Lecture on the Origin of the Parsee Religion*.
425 M. Haug, "Dr. Haug's Reply," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, October 10, 1861; Dhanjibhai Nowrojee, "Correspondence Between Ourselves and Dr. Haug," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, October 10, 1861.
426 Martin Haug, *Essays On The Sacred Language, Writings, And Religion Of The Parsis*, 1878, 3-.

> Since that day, there has been no more Christian polemic against the Parsis, and the Parsis say "Haug has done us a service", and they esteem him a great Zoroastrian scholar.[427]

Cama worked with European philologists and scholars such as Haug to uncover the deep antiquity of the Zoroastrian scriptures, placing them anterior to both Christianity and Judaism. Europeans became interested in Zoroastrianism not to convert Parsis as Wilson had attempted, but as part of a larger endeavour of comparatively understanding the historical development of religion. A memorial volume dedicated to Cama presents a collection of essays by Parsis and Europeans that discuss Zoroastrianism using these methods.[428] Parsis once again became the authors of their own story writing the entry about their history in the 1899 *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, the standard of colonial knowledge about India.[429] Five years later at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago a Parsi addressed the conference in which he discussed the land of Zarathustra, his age, the man, and his teaching.[430]

It was Cama who inspired Jivanji Jamshedji Modi to become a Zoroastrian scholar and sponsored his membership of the Anthropological Society. Modi later initiated the building of a column in Sanjan to commemorate the story told in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, which in turn provoked enormous historical dispute and an outpouring of historical writing. Modi himself participated in these debates and co-authored the next revision studied. Notably, some of Cama's students also opposed the column and disputed the historical accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*.[431]

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427 Quoted in Boyce see Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 203.

428 Modi, *The K.R. Cama memorial volume essays on Iranian subjects*; A biography of Cama was written by the British publisher of the Bombay Gazetteer, the Mumbai census and a secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society. See Stephen Meredyth Edwardes, *Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, 1831-1909: A Memoir* (n.p.: Oxford University Press, 1923); "Mr. S. M. Edwardes," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1 (January 1, 1927): 170–72.

429 James MacNabb Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency: Volume 9. Part 2*, vol. 9, Thana: Muslims and Parsis (Bombay: Gov. Central Press, 1899), 183–254.

430 Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha, *A Brief Sketch of the Zoroastrian Religion & Customs* (the Duftur Ashkara Oil Engine Printing Press, 1893).

431 They are Dastur Peshotan Sanjana, Kavasji Kanga, J. J. Modi, G. K. Nariman, S. K. Hodivala, M. N. Dhalla, S. Bharucha and T. Anklesaria. Cited in Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 96; Jamshedji Dadabhai Nadir-Shah, *Critical Studies of Some Zoroastrian Problems* (Bombay: n.p., 1938); Representatives of both sides of the column debate were on the executive committee that later, following Cama's death, founded the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in his memory. Today it holds the world's largest collection of Zoroastrian texts including the Qesse-ye Sanjan. The Institute produces knowledge using similar forms to colonial sites, but is controlled by Parsis. See "K. R. Cama Oriental Institute," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, April 14, 1933; Cama, *K.R. Cama*, vii–viii.

8.5 Historical thinking on entering the parenthesis

As this is the final chapter examining *The Parsees*, it will be helpful for the reader to summarise the transformation in Parsi historical consciousness relative to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. The historical consciousness expressed in *The Parsees* can be summarised as a representation of the past in the past for the present. However, the past that is represented is a vision of Parsi life as it was in 1599 because *The Parsees* seeks to create a sense of immediacy with the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. The audience were contemporary Parsis and the British as the past was no longer so precarious due to the augmentation of memory with print. Significantly, *The Parsees* was a response to a claim that Indians were ahistorical and the developmental thinking of colonial societies, which understood India as at a stage anterior to Britain. This is strikingly different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, which is a representation of the present in the past for the future.

The action that produced *The Parsees* was the augmented historian I term, print-history-karaka which is a type of print-history-human. This historiographical agent exists in the space between Karaka, the shifts in power I discussed in chapter six, together with the shifts in historiographical conventions and medium I discussed in chapter seven and eight. *The Parsees* was in part written by the individual named Karaka, but it was also created by the 1857 challenge to British rule, which it sought to explain historically. The book also came about because of a shift in conventions for narrating history and its method that came about in colonial societies, English education, and as a response to religious proselytising. Finally, print augmented memory and transformed narrative conventions. It is in the space between these shifts that we can find the agent responsible for composing *The Parsees*.

9. The 1954 *Early History of the Parsees* and the challenge to colonial rule

Illustration 6: Jesse Buck, *Sanjan Stambh*, photo, June 2013, Sanjan, Gujarat.

The column pictured on the previous page in illustration six was built in 1921 to commemorate the Parsis' flight from persecution and the refuge given in India. Today it stands in an overgrown field in Sanjan evoking ancient Iranian empires with a mock fire for a crown symbolising Zoroastrianism. The column was proposed in 1909 by Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (1854-1933) a scholar-priest who co-authored the third revision examined in this thesis, *The Early History of the Parsees in India*.[432] The proposal triggered heated debates amongst Parsis in Mumbai concerning the accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and their story of persecution. These debates continued for the next forty years. For its opponents, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was not history but a legend because their ancestors had not fled religious persecution in Iran. They proffered a variety of other explanations for the existence of Zoroastrians in India. They objected to the Gujarati, Avestan, and English text that was to be placed on a plaque at the column's base. Despite their objections the text was not altered and today reads:[433]

> This column has been erected by the Parsis of India in pious memory of their good Iranian ancestors, who, after the downfall of their empire under their last Monarch Yazdazard Shahriyar for the sake of their religion dearer than life, left their native land, and suffering innumerable hardships at length landed at this once famous port of Sanjan, and settled under the protection of its kind Hindu ruler Jadi Rana.[434]

The debates took place in the context of shifting political alliances in both India and Iran. A key opponent was Gushtaspshah Kaikhushro Nariman (1873-1933) who sought reconciliation with Iranian Muslims. His objection is cited in *The Early History*.[435] He wrote to the *Times of India* that the

> inscription...on the Sanjan column which implies religious persecution of the Parsis of Persia by Islam and the Arabs ignores history...Let the Sanjan column be there symbolical of the rallying cry of Iran and let the text and the inscription be so varied as to revive no other memories save those of the united past of a country where Iranians of whatever religious denomination may again flourish[436]

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432 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*.
433 This is the three millennia old dead language in which the oldest Zoroastrian texts are composed.
434 Text on the Sanjan Column or Sanjan Stambh transcribed by the author.
435 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, 3.
436 Gushtaspshah Kaikhushro Nariman, "Parsi Immigration: A Protest," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 7, 1920.

For Modi, the story of a treaty trading asylum for loyalty created a historical bond with Hindus and a shared hostility to Muslims. In his reply to Parsi opponents of the column in the Iranian Association, he expressed his loyalty to Hindu India. Of the column he wrote:

> May it always remind us of Love and Duty towards this great country, where we, with our other sister communities, may well raise a mild cry of Bandemataram.

By referring to Bandemataram, Modi was invoking the Indian independence movement that was taking hold at the time.[437] He then went on to recite what is today the most famous line of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* "we shall be the friends of the whole of India", writing:

> May the Column stand for centuries to come. May it remind us of our glorious past, and stand as a symbol of steadfastness to Truth and Freedom displayed by our Ancestors, as a symbol of Gratefulness to the mild Hindus for their Hospitality, and to the Benign British for their Justice and Protection. May it remind us of the words of the Dastur said to Jadi Rana on the very first day of landing at Sanjan : " Hame Hindustanra yar bashim i.e. We shall be the friends of the whole of India."[438]

Modi and Nariman's quotes reflect different alliances, which are often quite ambiguous. Whereas Modi emphasised an alliance with the British and Hindus, Nariman focused on an alliance with Hindus and Muslims, both in India and Iran.

Out of these debates a number of historical revisions of the Parsi origin story were produced of which *The Early History* is one. The book was commissioned in 1912 by a Parsi priest who made a donation to a community society in order to produce a definitive history of the Parsis from the Arab conquest until the seventeenth century.[439] The book seeks to resolve the disputes over the factual accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the Parsis' received tradition. These disputes centred, as was the case in the column debates, on whether the Parsis were persecuted in Iran by Muslims, on when and how they arrived India, and on their early history in India.[440] *The Early History* argues that the received tradition is largely historically accurate. Initially Modi was entrusted with its composition, and he began research in 1912, but due to his failing health the project was

437 Bandemataram is a famous Bangla poem to Mother India.
438 Modi, *Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.*, 78.
439 The name of the priest is Ervad Kersaspji Rustomji Dadachanji. The society is the Zartoshti Dharam Sambandhi Kelavni Apnari une Dnyan Felavnari Mandli or, the Society for the Promotion of Zoroastrian Religious Knowledge and Education.
440 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, iii.

taken over by Rustom Burjorji Paymaster (1870-1943) in 1930. Paymaster finished writing it in 1941 but due to the war it was published posthumously in 1954.

The next three chapters examine *The Early History* seeking to understand how this revision of the Parsi story came to be, and the relationship between the historical consciousness it expresses and earlier revisions. I propose that just as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and *The Parsees* were produced by differently augmented historians, so to *The Early History* was the result of an agent I term print-history-modi-paymaster, which is a form of print-history-human. In this chapter I examine the shifts in power asking: which contingent shifts in power provoked revisionist Parsi histories including Modi's and Paymaster's in the early twentieth century? I contend that existing revisions such as Karaka's 1858 or 1884 histories which justified British rule seemed insufficient in light of three contingencies, which required a novel explanation: Iran's de-Islamicisation and a national movement predicated upon a shared Zoroastrian past, the rise of an Indian Hindu nationalist movement, and the decline of British power. In chapter ten I examine the historical sensibility of *The Early History* comparing it to *The Parsees* and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. I conclude that *The Early History* sought to align Parsis with Hindus by revising the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* story of a treaty trading loyalty for refuge, shared persecution at the hands of Muslims, and ancient familial links between Zoroastrians and Hindus. In chapter eleven I explore the column debates in more detail and how they express an empirical historical sensibility.

Before beginning I should note that neither Modi nor Paymaster were involved in the Indian independence movement.[441] They did not support the more radical aims of Indian independence. They sought dominion status, or home-rule within the empire similar to Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.[442] Ironically Modi and Paymaster narrated a story of mixing with Hindus, yet their allegiance was to their own community for whom they pragmatically sought the best outcome. *The Early History* is thus a pragmatic response of two British loyalists with a deep hostility to Islam.

441 Paymaster wrote poems that were imperial, but there was a tension. See Nalini Natarajan and Emmanuel Sampath Nelson, *Handbook of Twentieth-Century Literatures of India* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996).

442 Rustom Burjorji Paymaster, "Parsis and Independence: To the Editor of 'the Times of India,'" *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 1, 1930; Paymaster published poems on Parsi involved in the Congress such as Dadabhai Naoroji and Pherozeshah Mehta together with leading Hindu moderates such as Kashmath Telang and Gopal Gokhale. See Rustom Burjorji Paymaster, *Navroziana, or, The Dawn of a New Era: Being Poems on Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and Other Friends of India : With The Voice of the East on the Great War (2nd Series)* (Bombay: R.B. Paymaster, 1917).

9.1 The Parsis' Iranian turn

The Parsis' Iranian turn developed over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century. They produced histories and learnt about Iran engaging with their remaining Zoroastrian brethren. Amongst the opponents of the column were a group of Parsis who sought reconciliation with Muslim Iran. They were emboldened by a nationalist transformation amongst Muslim Iranians that downplayed Islamic history and instead focused on Iran's Zoroastrian past. In Iran this transformation culminated in the 1905-7 Constitutional Revolution that ended Islamic rule.

The origin of the Parsis' Iranian shift was the 1848 publication of a letter from a Danish Zoroastrian scholar. He wrote that the conditions of the Iranian Zoroastrians were "below the lowest Hindus".[443] This was a provocative statement for the elite Parsis who imagined themselves as superior to Hindus and more historically advanced. The Parsis responded in 1854 by sending Manekjee Limji Hataria (1813-1890)

> to inquire into and report upon the social, political and intellectual condition of the Zoroastrians in Persia.[444]

His report painted a stark picture of their deprivations and poverty, which led Parsis to establish the "Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund". Initially the fund paid the jizya poll tax that Zoroastrians were forced to pay as non-Muslims. The fund also paid for the dowry of poor Zoroastrian girls so that they would not need to marry Muslim due to poverty. Under Iranian law at the time Zoroastrians were forced to wear clothing that marked them as non-Muslims, and they were not allowed to have horses or houses taller than their Muslim neighbours. Hataria and the fund lobbied the Persian government to lift the jizya poll tax, and in 1882 with the help of British diplomats they succeeded.[445] Hataria then turned to organising the internal governance of Iranian Zoroastrians along similar lines to the Parsis. He initiated European style education amongst the Zoroastrians and facilitated the influx of Parsi money. They entered European style education before Muslim Iranians and became merchants who dominated the trade with India.[446] Within a generation the situation of Iranian Zoroastrians was transformed from rural poverty to a wealthy and powerful minority in Tehran.[447] The Zoroastrians in Iran came to occupy a similar position to the Parsis in India.

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443 The Danish scholar is Professor Westergaard. Quoted in Ringer, *Pious Citizens*, 145–46.
444 Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, 1884, 1:72; Maneckji Limji Hataria, *Travels in Iran: A Parsi Mission to Iran*, 1865, http://www.fravahr.org/spip.php?article61.
445 Ringer, *Pious Citizens*, 144–49; Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 142–44.
446 Ringer, *Pious Citizens*, 164.
447 Ringer, 150–54, 173.

The 1854 re-engagement with Iran spurred the development of an Iranian consciousness amongst Parsis.[448] As the century progressed a proportion of Parsis began to see themselves as ethnic Iranians, jettisoning their Gujarati identity in favour of an Iranian one. The Iranian national epic, the *Shahnama*, became especially popular; it was reputed to be the young Naoroji's favourite book.[449] The tight embrace between the Parsis and the British produced a historical narrative of ancient Iran that complemented the *Shahnama's* account of a glorious pre-Islamic Iranian past. In 1890 a Parsi expressed a desire for a third Zoroastrian empire in Iran, and some Parsis responded by reprinting and sending copies of their religious texts to Iran.[450]

In this period Parsis also began researching and publishing histories of Iran. Following the narrative structure of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, Karaka's 1858 history had only touched on pre-Islamic Iran. By 1884 his new *History of the Parsis* had an enlarged section on pre-Islamic Iran.[451] From 1889 Parsis became aware that histories about Iran were largely composed by the British rather than Parsis. One of the Parsis who would sit on the future Sanjan Column sub-committee of history experts, built upon a British study of the ancient Achaemenid Empire that ruled Iran from 550 to 330BCE. His history chronologically narrated the greatness of the ancient Iranian Zoroastrian empires that were destroyed by the Arab invasion and fell into oblivion for one thousand years until the arrival of the British.[452]

9.2 A Muslim Iranian history of Zoroastrian origins

Over the same period in Iran a nationalist imagination developed predicated upon a historical narrative of a glorious Zoroastrian past. For Iranian Muslims their national distinctiveness from Muslims in other countries, and particularly from Arabs, was due to Zoroastrianism. A national identity was made possible by a shift in historical consciousness and method that made an ancient Zoroastrian past retrievable. In this newly minted national narrative all Iranians were included and bound by a shared Zoroastrian past

448 Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 142.

449 Haug, *Lecture on the Origin of the Parsee Religion*, 4; "Books and Authors: The Shah Namah," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, July 8, 1908; R P Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1939), 34.

450 "The Parsees in Ancient History," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, May 15, 1890.

451 Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, 1884, 1:1–22.

452 Pahalanaji Barajoraji Desai, *History of the Achaemenides, being a chronicle of the Parsee monarchs of the Achaemenian dynasty of ancient Persia* (Bombay: Duftur Ashkara, 1889); Pahalanaji Barajoraji Desai, "The ostracism of the Achiemenides from the Pahlavi works and the Shan Nameh," in *The K.R. Cama memorial volume essays on Iranian subjects*, ed. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (Bombay: Fort printing Press, 1900).

regardless of religion.[453] In the last quarter of the century major writers, poets, and the press glorified Iran's pre-Islamic past. One of the key intellectuals held Islam responsible for the decline of Persia believing Zoroastrianism was the authentic religion of Iran.[454]

In 1905 the Iranian Constitutional Revolution began, which led to the establishment of a parliament. The constitution created a space for Zoroastrians who had previously been excluded by inaugurating the equal treatment for all citizens regardless of religion. For the first time in more than a thousand years a Zoroastrian had a seat on the governing council of Iran.[455]

There was a Parsi link to the Constitutional Revolution. A key actor who propounded a secular anti-clerical Iranian nationalism had earlier travelled to Mumbai and met with Parsi merchants.[456] Prominent Iranian Zoroastrian merchants and a Parsi who had come to live in Iran were active participants in the movement, and in the lead-up Zoroastrian merchants supported liberal Muslim projects.[457] By 1905 Zoroastrian merchants in Tehran had formed themselves into a governing body using the same structure as Parsi organisations.[458] One of the key members who would go on to lead the organisation was educated in an American missionary school in Tehran and a Parsi school in Mumbai.

Parsi proposals to migrate to Iran became especially popular during the Constitutional Revolution and the radical turn of the Indian National Congress, which I will address shortly.[459] As Parsis became anxious about their future in Hindu India, Iran invited them to return. The centrality of a Zoroastrian past in the developing Iranian national historical imagination created the possibility of a Parsi return. In 1907 the Shah of Iran's Ambassador addressed Parsis in Mumbai; in response some Parsis noted the favourable conditions that now existed for Zoroastrians in Iran.[460]

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453 Ringer argues that the connection between Parsis and Iranians, both Zoroastrian and Muslim, was born out of a shared historical past. See Ringer, *Pious Citizens*.

454 This was Fathali Akhundov see Mangol. Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution Shi'ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 145.

455 Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 219; Ringer, *Pious Citizens*, 168; For another take on the Parsi link to Iranian modernity see Talinn Grigor, "Parsi Patronage of the Urheimat," *Getty Research Journal*, no. 2 (January 1, 2010): 53–68.

456 Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution Shi'ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909*, 145; Also see Ringer, *Pious Citizens*, 167–70.

457 His name is Ardeshirgi see Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution Shi'ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909*, 49, 61, 131.

458 It was called the "Zoroastrian Anjoman of Tehran".

459 Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 145.

460 "SPECIAL PERSIAN MISSION: Reception by the Parsis," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, July 13, 1907.

9.3 Questioning the persecution of Zoroastrians

Thus, in 1911 we arrive at the column debates. For Nariman, one of the key opponents of the column, the problem with this Iranian turn amongst Parsis and the Zoroastrian turn for Iranian Muslims was the persecution narrative. Shared hostility to Islam bound the Parsis to Hindus, the British, and Iranian Muslim apostates. But from Nariman's perspective, it did not connect them to the mass of Iranians who were simultaneously Muslim and Iranian. While some Parsis entertained the possibility of reconverting Iran to Zoroastrianism, Nariman, and others sought to re-evaluate their persecution narrative. Nariman's revises history to account for Iran's de-Islamicisation, which was something that Karaka's 1884 history could not explain due to its vitriolic hostility to Islam. For example, Karaka wrote:

> on the conquest of Persia the Mahomedan soldiers of the khalifat of Bagdad traversed the length and breadth of the country, presenting the alternative of death or the Koran, and compelling the conquered nation to accept the one or the other...Under rulers carrying out this system without pity or remorse almost the whole Zoroastrian population of Persia embraced the faith of Islam, and nearly every trace of the religion of Zoroaster became obliterated.[461]

Nariman was driven by a desire for reconciliation with Muslims and Iran. In 1919 Nariman expresses his "fortune" to read the "abounding" references

> to the love of the Parsis for the land of their ancient provenance, their pride in their historical past and their ardent desire to commingle again with the people in Iran who trace their descent in common with the Parsis of India to ancestors of fame.[462]

The problem as he saw it was

> to-day Islamic Persia is prepared to give precedence to Iran over every other consideration. It behoves the Parsis therefore to scrutinize the other side of the shield and to clasp the outstretched hand of their compatriots' amity.[463]

461 Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, 1884, 1:22–23.
462 Gushtaspshah Kaikhushro Nariman, "Parsis and Persia: To the Editor of the Times of India," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, May 17, 1919.
463 Nariman, "PARSI IMMIGRATION."

The thrust of Nariman's intervention is illustrated by a Muslim's letter to the editor of *The Times of India*:

> I hope those who through ignorance or prejudice call 'Islam the religion the sword' will learn a lesson from him.[464]

This quote demonstrates how Nariman's position was used in defence against the oft repeated European, Parsi, and Hindu claim that Muslims forcibly converted non-Muslims and the Islamic empire expanded through violence.

Nariman was a cosmopolitan and used the past to illustrate solidarity with both Hindus and Muslims. He wrote a book on Buddhism, participated in conferences on inter-communal unity, and Hindu-Muslim unity was one of his favourite subjects.[465] Nariman welcomed Gandhi's release from prison and supported Indian nationalism but within the British Empire.[466] Ironically, he was one of the few non-Hindu contributors to a memorial volume that advanced the cause of Hindu nationalism.[467] Nariman translated another book on the syncretic interaction between Zoroastrian Iran and Islam.[468] As a result many Parsis thought Nariman was pro-Muslim and anti-Zoroastrian, but this claim does not withstand close scrutiny.[469]

Nariman was involved in the formation of the Iran League in 1922, which sought to foster connections between Parsis and Iran.[470] He was Vice-President of the league and edited its journal the *Iran League Quarterly* for many years.[471] It was written by one commentator that the

> happy and cherished ideal of the *Iran League* to effect complete rapprochement between the Parsis and the Iranians living all over the world, is already in the process of being accomplished since some years.[472]

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464 Munshi Mahmud Khan, "The Sanjan Memorial: To the Editor of the Times of India," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 14, 1920.

465 Gushtaspshah Kaikhushro Nariman et al., *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism; from Winternitz, Sylvain Levi, Huber* (Bombay Indian Book Depot, 1923); "Declaration of Rights: The Conference ... of Inter-Communal Co-Operation," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, September 27, 1924; Gushtaspshah Kaikhushro Nariman, *Posthumous Works.*, ed. S. H Jhabvala (Bombay: S.H. Jhabvala, 1938), 2.

466 "MR.GANDHI'S RELEASE: PARSl CONGRATULATIONS," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 19, 1924; Nariman, *Posthumous Works.*, 58.

467 It is striking that Nariman was invited to write a piece for Mohan Malaviya, the founder of the Benares Hindu University A. B. Dhruva, ed., *Malaviya Commemoration Volume.* (Varanasi: Benares Hindu University, 1932).

468 Gushtaspshah Kaikhushro Nariman and Konstantin Aleksandrovich Inostrantsev, *Iranian Influence on Moslem Literature: Part 1* (Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co, 1918).

469 Nariman and Paymaster, *Writings of G. K. Nariman (Orientalist and Linguist)*, i.

470 Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 143–44.

471 Nariman and Paymaster, *Writings of G. K. Nariman (Orientalist and Linguist)*, iii.

472 Pestanji Phirozshah Balsara, *Ancient Iran, Its Contribution to Human Progress* (Bombay: Iran League, 1936), vi.

Members of the League occupied a variety of positions from seeking the establishment of a Parsi colony in Iran to promoting closer relations. They created a tourist guide for Parsis to facilitate Parsi visits to Iran[473] and "suggested to Parsi parents to teach Persian once again to their children instead of French and Latin."[474] However they were at pains to point out that they were not anti-Indian, which indicates that such a charge existed. The editor of their journal wrote:

> Every Parsee in India loves this noble land as his dear darling mother: he has gambolled on her bosom, grown on her milk and prospered in her vast and rich expanse; and hence his regard for her is one of gratitude, fidelity and love. He has served her with greater sincerity, selflessness and sacrifice than any other people, and he will continue to do so till the end of times. Politically too the Parsee has quite greater right to her citizenship than either the Hindu or the Moslem. These claim it by right of conquest, for the Hindus conquered India from the Dravidians, and the Moslems from the Hindus. But the Parsees claim it by rights of treaty, sacrifice and service; and so their claim on India is more sacred, more certain and more deserved than of any other people.[475]

The cause of Parsi-Iranian reconciliation was further enhanced in 1925 with the establishment in Iran of the de-Islamicising Pahlavi dynasty of Reza Khan, who would become Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878-1944). He instituted a policy of "authoritarian modernisation" and consulted with an Iranian Zoroastrians in such matters.[476] The shah drew upon Zoroastrian symbols in order to legitimate his rule introducing a solar calendar with Zoroastrian names for the months, and the Zoroastrian Fravahar symbol was placed on the Iranian Coat of Arms in 1932 and on government buildings such as the national bank, Ministry of Justice, and on police stations. An American consular official suggested that the Shah wanted to reintroduce Zoroastrianism as the religion of Iran.[477] In 1925 the Shah invited the Parsis to return to Iran writing:

473 Rustam Kharegat, *A Tourist Guide to Iran.* (Bombay: G. Claridge, 1935).
474 "Parsis and Persia: The Iran League Activities During Last Three Years," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 1, 1927.
475 Sohrab Bulsara, ed., *The Iran League Quartely* (Bombay, 1931), 4.
476 His name is Sharokh.
477 Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 83; Ringer, *Pious Citizens*, 181.

> The Parsis, who are the sons of this holy soil...should see their way to return to this land and be engaged in the service of their ancient Motherland.[478]

As a consequence, Parsis produced revisionist histories in which the persecution story is absent to bind them to Iran.[479] An example of this type of history was written by a member of the Iran League named Jehangir Barjorji Sanjana in 1935 and is entitled *A Comprehensive History of The Parsis and their Religion from Primeval Times to Present Age*. It was published in India for a Parsi audience. The book begins with three portraits. One depicts the Parsi to whom the book is dedicated, the second is Reza Shah, and the third his son, the Crown Prince. In the preface Sanjana explains his motivations for writing the book. Firstly he relates it to Karaka, writing:

> Much water has passed under the bridge since the publication of Mr. D. F. Karaka's excellent History of the Parsis. It is time that there should be written by a Parsi a fresh history of his people and of their original fatherland and Religion in the light of the important archaeological, ethnological, philological and historical researches which have been made since Mr. Karaka wrote his book.

Thus, it is a revision of Karaka's history, but he also locates it within the Iranian developments. He continues:

> Such a history is all the more called for at this period in view of the wonderful awakening of the Iranian nation under the magical inspiration of H. I. M. Reza Shah Pahlavi. This great patriot has in a remarkably short time succeeded in reviving the old Iranian spirit in his people. There is created in them a burning desire to learn all about their eminent ancestors of yore and the venerable Religion which modelled and influenced their lives. Simultaneously, there is awakened in the Parsis of India an absorbing interest in their ancient land and an earnest desire to know more and more about their forefathers and to understand the philosophy of the Religion taught by Zoroaster.[480]

478 Quoted in Ali Ashgar Hikmat, *Parsis of Iran; Their Past and Present.* (Bombay: Iran League, 1956).

479 Disputing the tradition were works such as Nariman and Paymaster, *Writings of G. K. Nariman (Orientalist and Linguist)*; Nadir-Shah, *Critical Studies of Some Zoroastrian Problems*; Bhathena, *Kisse-Sanjan. A Palpable Falsehood.*

480 Jehangir Barjorji Sanjana, *A Comprehensive History of The Parsis and Their Religion from Primeval Times to Present Age* (Bombay: Jehangir Barjorji Sanjana, 1935), v.

Sanjana's history is primarily about the pre-Islamic Iranian dynasties with only about one tenth of the book devoted to the Parsis in India; the millennium they spent in India is reduced to a sojourn. Significantly, the conquest of Iranian culture by the Arabs is inverted as he writes:

> The Arabs could not Arabianise the Iranians, but were themselves Iranianised to some extent...Their long contact with the Iranians both before and after the conquest gave them a good deal of culture...whatever fame or uplift Islam achieved was simply due to the activities of the Persian Muslims alone.[481]

Thus, the column debates produced a set of histories in which the persecution narrative was absent. They responded to the development of an Iranian national imagination amongst Parsis and a Zoroastrian national imagination amongst Iranian Muslims, which culminated in the Constitutional Revolution. These histories revised the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* disputing the persecution narrative and the Parsis' encounter with Hindus in order to reconcile with Muslim Iranians. However, as I will show in the next section, *The Early History* revised the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in opposition to this development, using the past to bind Parsis to Hindus in a shared hostility to Muslims.

9.4 The Indian National Congress and an assertion of liberal rights

The second part of understanding the contingency that *The Early History* sought to explain historically was the development of a movement for Indian rights that would become the independence movement. Central to this movement was the Indian National Congress. The emerging possibility that India might once again be ruled by Hindus generated an anxiety amongst Parsis outside of the movement. Anxiety was fuelled by the emergence of a Hindu revivalist movement that resisted colonial rule using a Hindu idiom.

In 1885 the Congress was formed by a Hindu, an Englishman, and Dadabhai Naoroji. As noted earlier, Naoroji was a Parsi and belonged to the same generation of social reformers as Karaka. In Mumbai the movement originated in Naoroji's generation of anglicised Hindu and Parsi social reformers. The Congress was created to advance the rights of Indians within the British Empire, and would go on to be the leading nationalist organisation in the independence movement. Although there are many strands in what

481 Sanjana, 555–56.

would become a broadly-based independence movement, the Congress was central for the Parsis as it was a movement of the Indian elite to which the Parsis belonged.

For the social reformers, liberalism was both a justification for colonial rule and an argument for its resistance. As was previously established, a stadial history premised on liberalism justified colonial rule. However, a liberal argument was also used to challenge colonial rule by asserting equality and democratic rights. The reformers came to the conclusion that the practice and rhetoric of the colonial mission did not match. Reformers argued that while the British preached liberalism they did not practise it by denying equal rights to Indians. Social reformers sought to assert the rights of Indians as equal subjects of the crown and fulfil the British liberal civilisational mission in India. Parsis were disproportionately involved in this campaign.[482] Furdoonjee, one of Karaka and Naoroji's fellow Elphinstonians and social reformer who had rebuked the missionary attack on Zoroastrianism, said in an 1874 speech:

> Freedom of thought and action, perfect liberty, impartial justice, and equality of rights, irrespective of creed or race, have been guaranteed to all Her Majesty's subjects in India; but these fundamental principles are often violated in the case of Natives of the soil who are treated as a conquered and inferior race by their British rulers.[483]

Naoroji exemplifies a Parsi tension between colonial rule and liberalism. To this day he is a towering figure in the Parsi community and as I will show in later chapters; features prominently in the historiography of the Indian independence movement.[484] He received an English education at Elphinstone College and then became a key instigator in its diffusion. Naoroji was the first Indian to become a professor and taught mathematics at

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482 Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century.* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968); William Gould, *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Gordon Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism; Bombay and the Indian National Congress, 1880 to 1915.* (Cambridge [England: University Press, 1973).

483 Nowrozjee Furdoonjee, *The Personal Bearing of Europeans in India towards the Natives: A Paper Read before the London Branch of the National Indian Association* (London: Trübner and Co., 1874); Furdoonji was also secretary of the first political organisation of Bombay Indians, the Bombay Association. See Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 154–55.

484 See for example Arun Bhattacharjee, *The Prophets of Modern Indian Nationalism: (Raja Rammohun Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Swami Vivekananda, Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Pherozeshah Mehta)* (Delhi: Ashish, 1993); Munni Rawal, *Dadabhai Naoroji, a Prophet of Indian Nationalism, 1855-1900* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1989); Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*; Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India 1.* (Calcutta: Mukhopadhyay, 1962); S.R Singh, *Dadabhai Naoroji, 1825-1917 the Grand Old Man of India* (New Delhi: Congress Centenary, Celebration Committee, 1985); Devendra Nath Bannerjea, *India's Nation Builders* (London: Headley Bros., 1919).

the college. He advanced women's education and was a key nineteenth century social reformer. In 1892, he became the first Asian elected to the British parliament in the London seat of Central Finsbury.[485] The tension between liberal ideals and colonial rule was exemplified in his highly influential 1901 book titled *Poverty and un-British rule in India*.[486] Here he proposed the "drain theory" that illustrated the net economic loss for India as a result of British rule. For Naoroji the problem was that the British were not British enough, they needed to fulfil their liberal civilisational mission rather than drain the wealth of India.

There was a unanimity between Parsi and Hindu social reformers who saw themselves as representative of India rather than of their respective communities. Their writings express a deep affection for each other, in part, because they saw themselves as Indian nationalists. Naoroji famously said in his 1893 presidential address to the Congress:

> Whether I am a Hindu, a Muhammadan, a Parsi, a Christian, or any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India; our nationality is Indian.[487]

Parsis did not vote as a bloc or seek to represent their community even through they were highly influential in the Congress and dominated earlier political organisations in Mumbai.[488] Rather it was Parsis outside of the Congress that sought to represent and prioritise the community's interests. They had become wedded to their mutually advantageous relationship with the British. The Parsis represented in the Congress were a minority within the community and faced significant opposition.[489]

9.5 Hindu revivalism and Parsi anxiety

Within the Congress there emerged a variety of factions that began to assert an anti-colonial agenda using a Hindu idiom, which provoked historical revisions. This was a source of anxiety for Parsis outside the Congress who had aligned with the British and were unsure of their place in Hindu India. The Congress in its first phase until 1917 was avowedly secular. However, the rumblings of a national imagination based upon Hindus

485 Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*; Singh, *Dadabhai Naoroji, 1825-1917 the Grand Old Man of India*.

486 Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (London: S. Sonnenschein & Co., 1901).

487 Dadabhai Naoroji, *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji.* (Madras: Natesan, 1917), 61, http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:10873418.

488 These are the Bombay Association and then in the Bombay Presidency Association. See Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*.

489 See for example Nusserwanji Sheriarji Ginwalla, "The Parsees and the Congress: To the Editor of the Times of India," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, November 14, 1890; "The National Indian Congress," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 11, 1890; Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 146, 182–90; Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 293.

and Hinduism ran in parallel. Out of a variety of positions within the Congress, three main strands developed. The first was avowedly secular and came to be represented by India's first Prime Minster Jawaharlal Nehru. He envisioned a territorial and anti-colonial India in which Parsis were individual citizens. The second was epitomised by Gandhi who used a Hindu idiom to imagine India as collection of equal religious communities. In this context, Parsis were simply a Zoroastrian community. The third, known as Hindutva, would splinter from Congress in the 1920s and regarded India as a Hindu nation. Hindutva is generally regarded as hostile towards Muslims and Christians but inclusive of Parsis. Individual Parsis had complex relationships with all three movements and produced historical revisions, which negotiated a variety of alliances.[490]

Central to Parsi anxiety was an influential congressman named Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920). In the 1890s Tilak and others initiated mass Hindu festivals that challenged colonial rule while alienating many Parsis and Muslims.[491] He linked the Brahmin elite, to which he belonged, to the mass of Hindus in the region by invoking the popular god Ganpati.[492] He also inaugurated a festival to celebrate Shivaji, the seventeenth century Martha leader that fought against the Mughals. As I noted in an earlier chapter, the raids of Shivaji and his descendants into southern Gujarat and their sacking of Parsi towns was part of the reason for the Parsis migration to Mumbai. In 1928 Modi, one of the author's of *The Early History,* wrote an article for the *Times of India* about Shivaji titled "What was he like?" He produced a translation of an early eighteenth century Parsi poem describing Shivaji's attack on Surat with a translation that reads

> He [Shivaji] came towards the city [Surat] like Ahriman with a large equipage. He seized women, men and milk-drinking children from all the four directions and carried them away.[493]

In the late nineteenth century a division emerged between Tilak and a Parsi social reformer named Behramji Merwanji Malabari (1853-1912). Although the Congress did not have a platform of social reform, many of its members such as Malabari engaged in social

490 For an overview of Hindu revivalism and the cow movement see Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism; Bombay and the Indian National Congress, 1880 to 1915.*; For an overview of Hindu nationalism see Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism a Reader*.

491 Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 172–2.

492 Kaur argues that the role of Tilak in the mobilising of the Ganpati festival has been overstated and that he was more of a publicist. See Raminder Kaur, "At the Ragged Edges of Time: The Legend of Tilak and the Normalization of Historical Narratives," *South Asia Research* 24, no. 2 (November 1, 2004): 185–202; For Tilak's political use of Ganpati see Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya: Tilak and Mass Politics in Maharashtra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 75–97.

493 In Zoroastrianism Ahriman is opposed to Ahura Mazda, God. In the more dualistic flourishes of the religion he is the equal opposite to God. See Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, "Shivaji: What Was He Like? To the Editor of 'the Times of India.,'" *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, December 22, 1928.

activism. Over the course of the nineteenth century Parsi social reformers had challenged social practices that were understood to be the cause of their inferiority relative to the British; such as, child marriage, education, and as we have noted, the status of women. Towards the end of the century they had largely succeeded and turned their attention to reforming other communities.[494] In 1884 Malabari published a *Note on Infant Marriage in India* in both the Indian and English press to agitate for a law against child marriages. He had the support of some leading Hindu reformers.[495] This agitation led to the drafting of the Age of Consent Bill in 1891 that lifted the age of consent for girls from ten to twelve years old.[496] Tilak objected to this interference in Hindu practices by a Parsi. This illustrates the growing division between a section of Hindu revivalists and pan-Indian social reformers. Tilak wrote:

> Again if Mr. Malabari had been a Hindu it would have been some argument for vouchsafing a consideration of his writings. But he is a Parsi and it is a great injustice, calculated to cause considerable prejudice to the interests of Government, to interfere with Hindu customs at his instance.[497]

In this quote we can see a developing Hindu assertiveness against Parsis, which would lead to a bout of historical revisions narrating an alliance with Hindus in order to counteract this growing division.

9.6 The challenge to British rule

Parsi anxiety about their future reached a fever pitch with the tectonic shifts in power between 1905 and 1907. These years are crucial for understanding subsequent Parsi histories. The revisions produced over the next forty years used history to make sense of the Parsis place in response to the Hinduisation of the Congress and its more radical push for home rule together with the Iranian constitutional revolution.

In 1905, with the Congress on the wane, the British government made a strategic blunder by dividing the province of Bengal, ostensibly for administrative reasons, but it reignited the Congress. In his 1906 presidential address to the Congress, Naoroji declared

494 Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 111.

495 They are Mahadev Govind Ranade and Kashinath Trimbak Telang.

496 For studies of this incident see Meera Kosambi, *Crossing Thresholds: Feminist Essays in Social History* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), 274–310; Y.D. Phadke, "B. M. Malabari As A Social Reformer," in *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*, ed. Nawaz B. Mody (Bombay: Bombay Allied Publishers, 1999), 21–39; For a contemporary account see Dayaram Gidumal, *Behramji M. Malabari; Biographical Sketch* (London, T. F. Unwin, 1892).

497 *Sind Times* on 28th November cited p 6 week ending 6th December, Reports of the Native Press.

Swaraj, or home rule, as the goal of the movement. Naoroji was a compromise candidate between the moderates' assertion of Indian rights and Tilak's more radical insistence upon Swaraj. Naoroji's speech sought to appease both sides by declaring Swaraj within the Empire as the goal of the movement.[498] At the same time the Ganpati festival was restarted in Mumbai.[499] As the Congress began to Hinduise shedding its earlier avowedly secular pan-communal agenda, the Muslim League was formed in 1906. The numerically insignificant Parsis were losing their previously disproportionately strong voice relative to gigantic Hindu and Muslim blocs. As noted, many Parsis were acutely aware that their prosperity was tied to British rule. They feared for their place in a democratic Hindu majority India where Hindus would vote for Hindus and Muslims would vote for Muslims.[500] All of these factors combined with the 1905 defeat of Russia by Japan to create a sense that European power was waning. At the same time Iran's reconciliation with Zoroastrianism offered the possibility of returning to their ancient homeland.

Parsis responded to these shifts by expressing varying configurations of loyalty towards the British, Hindus, and Iran. In 1907 the pro-British *Times of India* received letters from Parsis expressing the community's loyalty to the British. A number expressed a fear that they would lose their jobs in the civil service if the Congress program was carried out. They repeated the murmurings of their British superiors in the civil service that the Parsis were disloyal. In these letters Parsis argued the community's position was not represented by the radicals within the Congress.[501] Other Parsis responded that this profession of loyalty was merely "lip-service" and was not required, as the British could rule India militarily without the Parsis. Another said the goals of the Congress were misunderstood as it only sought to advance the rights of Indians within the British Empire.[502] These exchanges provoked one Parsi to respond by invoking their first encounter with Hindus:

> The Hindus are an obliging nation. Their scriptures enjoin that hospitality and giving shelter to the homeless should be their guiding principles. When, therefore, more than twelve hundred years ago, a Hindu Raja gave shelter to the faithful followers of Zoroaster turned out of their homes by Mahomedan fanaticism

498 Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*, 257–85.
499 Barbara Daly Metcalf and Thomas R Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 157.
500 Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*, 171–72; Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 144–45.
501 H. J. A, "PARSIS AND POLITICS: A Mofussil View," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, May 21, 1907; "PARSIS AND POLITICS: View of a Leading Parsi," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, May 14, 1907.
502 K. P. N, "PARSIS AND POLITICS: A Rejoinder TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES OF INDIA," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, May 23, 1907.

> and driven to the shores by the roaring waves of the Arabian Sea, it was through a sense of duty and not in expectation of any material return that he did so. Let the young Parsis of to-day imagine themselves in the position of their suppliant forefathers, and consider what would have happened had the Hindus declined to grant the accommodation sought for.[503]

From 1915 the Parsis' role in the Congress declined and it became more avowedly Hindu. Until this point Parsis had been influential in organising, directing, and funding the Congress.[504] The split in the Congress between moderates and radicals resulted in the 1906 declaration of home rule and was resolved from 1915. Tilak returned to the Congress after years of imprisonment and the movement began to vigorously assert home rule using a Hindu idiom. In 1917 Naoroji died and in that year the British Secretary of State for India announced the

> gradual development of self governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.[505]

The stark reality of the Parsis' declining position was brought home in riots that targeted them in 1921. These were provoked by a tour of India by the Prince of Wales. While the Congress called for a boycott of the visit, Parsis and Anglo-Indians lined the streets of Mumbai to welcome the prince. In response Hindus and Muslims rioted against Parsi and Anglo-Indian establishments.[506] The riot crystallised a perception that the Parsis needed to abandon the British or face the consequences, which we can see in the following quotation from a conservative Parsi newspaper:

> It was openly declared in the nationalist papers that unless the Parsis joined their N. C. O. [Non Cooperation] movement their lot would be miserable.[507]

503 "PARSIS AND POLITICS: Another View," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, July 10, 1907.

504 In the first decade of the Congress a Parsi was President on three ocassions Dinker Vishnu Gokhale, *Inaugural Addresses by Presidents of the Indian National Congress, with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh's Speech* (Bombay: N.M. & Co., 1895); The Parsi industrialist Jamshedji Tata gave generously to the Congress Nawaz B. Mody, ed., *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century* (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005), 186; Kulke argues that although Tata did not join the Congress he gave generously but he was more interested in economic nationalism Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 131.

505 Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 164–66.

506 "Bombay Rioting: Effects of the Disturbances," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, December 15, 1921.

507 "The Bombay Riots: Duty of Government," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, November 28, 1921.

Some in the community blamed their coreligionists for the riots because of their nationalist agitation.[508] Nationalist Parsis by contrast blamed the recalcitrance of the British loyalists.

The riots ended thanks to the affection for Parsis held by the leader of the independence movement, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1868-1949). Signs were placed in Mumbai stating:

> Mr. Gandhi's Vow. So long as Hindus and Mahomedans of Bombay do not make peace with Parsis, Christians and Jews, and the non-co-operators do not make peace with the co-operators I will take no food and will drink nothing but water.[509]

Hostility to the Parsis' anglophilia was tempered by the fraternal affection between nationalists in the community and Hindu leaders.[510] Elite Hindus did not oppose the Parsis because they too were highly anglicised. Although the majority of the community did not support the independence movement, there were key Parsis whose political, intellectual, and financial support was integral to its early development. A Hindu affection can be seen in a 1921 address in Navsari by Gandhi:

> My especial object in coming to Navsari was to meet my Parsi sisters and brothers...My memories about them are so happy and my association with them has been so close that I feel under a debt to them...they have a special bond with India. India gave them shelter at a critical time. To be sure, she has lost nothing thereby. By accepting them, the Hindus and India as a whole have only gained. The Parsis, too, have gained. They can take pride in India, in calling themselves Indians.[511]

In the same period in Gujarat there were uprisings by tribal people against Parsi landlords who owned a significant proportion of the land. Parsis had acquired this land from tribal people through the liquor (or toddy) business, which they dominated. This

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508 They are referring to The Bombay Chronicle. See Parsi, "Journalism: To the Editor of the Times of India," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, November 24, 1921; B. N. Khory Naib Dewan Barwani, "Wake up Parsis: To the Editor of the Times of India," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, November 26, 1921.

509 "Situation on Sunday: Peace Missions," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, November 21, 1921.

510 This affection can also be seen in the publications of the nationalist press Natesan and Co. See *Dadabhai Naoroji: A Sketch of His Life and Life-Work.* (Madras: Natesan, 1909), https://archive.org/details/DadabhaiSketchLifeWork; *Dinshaw Edulji Wacha: His Life and Labors.* (Madras: Natesan, 1909); G.A. Natesan, *Famous Parsis: Biographical & Critical Sketches of Patriots, Philanthropists, Politicians, Reformers, Scholars, and Captains of Industry* (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co, 1930).

511 SPEECH AT MEETING IN NAVSARI, 21st April 1921 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Electronic Book)* (New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India, 1999), 73–75, http://www.gandhiserve.org/e/cwmg/cwmg.htm.

process involved the provision of alcohol on credit to tribal peoples which was guaranteed by their lands. The recurrent failure of crops resulted in foreclosure and the gradual accumulation of tribal land. One song of these people went:

> Oh friends! Do not drink daru or toddy.
> Oh friends! If you drink the Parsi will plunder your property.
> If you go to the Parsi your wealth will be plundered.[512]

A Parsi recounted in a letter that the tribal people

> taunted the Parsis, saying they should hand back the land which they had appropriated and go back to Persia.[513]

There was a sense that the Parsi ascendancy was coming to a close.

The Parsis who remained in the Indian freedom struggle could draw upon their existing historical narrative of a pact with Hindus and their fraternal friendships with Hindu leaders. They had in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and their existing tradition a narrative template. A Parsi Vice-President of the Indian Home Rule Society invoked the encounter in a letter that addressed the question of whether Parsis were Indians or foreigners. He wrote that although the Parsis originally came from Iran

> these persecuted refugees were allowed to enjoy peace and freedom in their new home and that under their Hindu rulers they were happy and prosperous.[514]

It is striking that a relative of Karaka who wrote *The Parsees*, saw the need for a historical revision due to the shift in power. In 1938 he wrote:

> When the British Raj was strong and powerful, we were staunch and loyal to it. Now with the rising tide of Congress opinion, and the growth of the Indian National Movement, we have suddenly awakened to the fact that our duty lies to the country which thirteen hundred years ago found a home for us, when we were fleeing from Persia in an attempt to rescue the Sacred Fire from the onslaught of Islam and the Arabs.[515]

512 David Hardiman, *The Coming of the Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 147.
513 Quoted from a letter by Faredun Dadachanji, 5 Dec 1923, Bombay Chronicle, 7 Dec, 1923. See Hardiman, 179.
514 Reprinted in Appendix II from a letter by Manchersha Baijoiji Godrej to The Indian Sociologist, London, March 1909, Volume V, Number 3, pp.10-11 Mody, *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*, 86.
515 Dosoo Framjee Karaka, *I Go West* (London: M. Joseph Ltd., 1938), 2.

Consequently we can see how the combination of Iran's reconciliation with its Zoroastrian past, the decline in British power, and the Hindu challenge to colonial rule necessitated revisions to historically explain and negotiate these complex shifts in power.

10. Using European historical methods to resist colonial rule

The three revisions studied so far negotiate different political alliances using different historical sensibilities. The political alliances and forms of historical consciousness are intertwined. Whereas for the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* the adaptation of an Indo-Persian sensibility creates an alliance between Parsis and Hindus against Muslims; for *The Parsees* a European ethnic national sensibility and stadial history aligns the Parsis with the British; *The Early History* creates a contemporary alliance between Parsis and Hindus against Muslims in support of home rule. In this chapter I examine how the historical sensibility expressed in *The Early History* creates a new alliance and how this sensibility is different from earlier revisions.

I propose that philology and print were part of a process to create an augmented historian I term print-history-modi-paymaster. Central to the historical thinking of this agent was an understanding of common Parsi-Hindu origins, in which their religions and people were described as branches of the same illustrious tree. A pact was created by a historical understanding of a fall in both Hindu and Zoroastrian civilisation due to Muslim invasion and repression. A civilisational fall was also used by Parsis to challenge the British by inverting stadial history to argue that ancient Zoroastrian Iran expressed the traits of modernity. In other words, modernity was not historically contingent and a recent historical development but existed in ancient Iran. Yet at the same time Parsis understood events and Zoroastrianism as a historical development. We can then see that late colonial Parsi historical consciousness was marked by two seemingly contradictory senses: on the one hand they assert that they have always been modern yet on the other assert that Zoroastrianism needed to be understood as a historical development.

This and the following chapter create a point of historiographical comparison with earlier and later revisions. In the next chapter I expand upon my exposition of this sensibility by focusing on how *The Early History* expresses a form of empiricism known as positivism and how authorial authority was transformed. Of the revisions discussed, *The Early History* is the fullest manifestation of parenthetical historical thinking, or modern print historical consciousness. This historical thinking can be characterised as a representation of the past in the past for an audience in the present. The sensibility of *The Early History* is different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, which represents the present in the past for a future audience and also *The Parsees*, which represents contemporary power

relationship in the past for a contemporary audience. It is worth noting that *The Early History* is the only revision studied that does what is often considered the core business of history, representing the past for a contemporary audience.

Before discussing these transformations it will be helpful for the reader to have a biographical snippet of the man who will feature prominently in this chapter and the next: the scholar priest named Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (1854-1933) who was the key advocate of the Sanjan memorial and one of the authors of the *Early History of the Parsees*. His photo appears in illustration seven, depicting him decorated in colonial medals. He exemplifies Parsi historical consciousness in the late colonial period and represents the next generation of historical thinking after Karaka and Cama. He was a graduate of Elphinstone College and the University of Bombay, the secretary of the peak Parsi body, the Bombay Parsi Panchayat for 37 years, and a key player in Zoroastrian studies and the writing of Parsi history. His illustrious title is Shams-ul-Ulama Ervad Dr. Sir, which signifies his knowledge as a Zoroastrian priest, holder of a doctorate, and his relationship to British power as a knight. He published 20 books in English, 41 in Gujarati, 3 in French, and 6 memorial volumes on historical, anthropological, and religious questions involving, an often comparative analysis, of Parsis, Hindus, India, and Iran. In court cases involving Zoroastrianism he was called as the expert witness. Modi delivered over 350 public lectures and read 127 papers before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and Anthropological Society of Bombay.[516] He was also an active Freemason. Simply put, Modi was a key Parsi intellectual both at the time and historically.

10.1 Philology and the common origins of Zoroastrians and Hindus

Integral for print-history-modi-paymaster was a philological method, which produced an understanding of an ancient common origin for both Zoroastrians and Hindus. As I illustrated in chapters seven and eight, Modi's mentor Cama and other Parsis began to adapt philology from Europeans in the second half of the nineteenth century. As noted, philologists had uncovered striking similarities between the languages of the most ancient Zoroastrian and Hindu texts. The comparative reading of these texts allowed a new comprehension of their meaning and therefore each religion in its early phase. A linguistic link came to be understood as a manifestation of common ethnic or racial origins. It was postulated that Zoroastrians and Hindus were from Central Asia and were once the same

516 Marzban J Giara, *Shams-Ul-Ulama Dr. Sir Ervad Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, Kt., C.I.E., B.A., Ph.D., LL.D. (1854-1933): An Illustrated Biography*, 1st ed. (Mumbai: Din Publications, 2001), 9–10.

Illustration 7: *Jivanji Jamshedji Modi*, photo, in Dr. Modi Memorial Volume; Papers on Indo-Iranian and Other Subjects, (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1930).

people. For instance Modi wrote of the ancient Iranian Zoroastrian king Cyrus:

> His policy, to a certain extent, aimed at gathering together in unity most of the Aryan races against the Semitic races.[517]

Prior to colonisation Parsis expressed an understanding of common origins with Hindus. This is hinted at in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, *The Sixteen Sanskrit Slokas*, and in twelfth century translation of Zoroastrian texts into Sanskrit.[518] But this understanding was derived from a different method in which one religion was compared with another rather. By contrast, the nineteenth century and twentieth century understanding was premised on a linguistic comparison based upon an all encompassing method for producing universal history.[519]

Philology and archaeology provoked a revision of the encounter narrative between Parsis and Hindus as it became apparent that Zoroastrians and Hindus had not met for the first time on the shores of Gujarat. Rather, they were from the same family whose ancestors had separated and then reconnected. In 1892 Desai, who would participant in the later column debates, disputed that Sanjan was the first contact between Zoroastrians and Hindus writing:

> history...reveals the fact that the Parsees have had intercourse with this country of a very long standing from a very ancient date.[520]

Two years later a Bengali Hindu delivered a lecture on Zoroastrianism to Parsis in Bombay that started with:

> There was a period when the ancestors of the Iranian Parsees and of the Aryan Hindus lived together in the same place, followed the same pursuits, sacrificed to the same gods, and spoke, more or less, the same language.[521]

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517 Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *The Influence of Iran on Other Countries* (Bombay: K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1954), 60.

518 Unvala, *Neryosangh's Sanskrit Version of Yasna XIX ...*; Dhaval, *The Book of the Mainyo-I-Khard: The Pazand and Sanskrit Texts, as Arranged by Neriosengh Dhaval, with an English Translation and Glossary by E. W. West*; Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha, *Collected sanskrit writings of the Parsis. Old translations of Avestâ and Pahlavi-Pâzend books as well as other original compositions; with various readings and notes.*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Printed at J. Dadaji's "Nirnaya-Sâgara" Press, 1906); Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha, *Collected sanskrit writings of the Parsis. Old translations of Avestâ and Pahlavi-Pâzend books as well as other original compositions; with various readings and notes.*, vol. 6 (Bombay: Printed at J. Dadaji's "Nirnaya-Sâgara" Press, 1906).

519 I disagree with Tavakoli-Targhi who argued that the European understanding of common Indo-Iranian origins was based upon a 17th century Indo-Iranian understanding. See Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 23–28.

520 "Mr. Desai on the First Parsees in India," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 31, 1892.

521 Nisikanta Chattopadhyaya, *Lecture on Zoroastrianism.* (Bombay, 1894), 1.

Philology began a Parsi-Hindu dialogue that sought to illuminate each other's origins and religions through a comparative analysis that continues to this day.[522] Parsis and Hindus produced numerous works in which they sought to locate references to each other in their oldest texts. They looked for references to Zoroastrians and Iranians in the ancient Hindu texts such as the *Rig Veda* and the *Mahabharata*. They compared their stories of ancient peoples and gods to find striking similarities.[523]

The Parsi story is revised in *The Early History* due to the historian's augmentation with methods from philology and archaeology. The first line states that their history begins with those who landed on the shores of Gujarat. However, the second line qualifies this statement by positing a pre-Parsi contact between Zoroastrians and Hindus by noting that Zoroastrians feature in the Hindu epic the *Mahabharata*, and the ancient Persian kings who ruled Gujarat.[524] British archaeologists are cited in order to justify a pre-Parsi link between Iran and India.[525] Over the course of the nineteenth century British historians and archaeologists had uncovered evidence of extinct Zoroastrian communities separate from the Parsis. On this basis Paymaster argues that earlier waves of Zoroastrian migrants had come to be incorporated into Hindu society. But as befitting a community who saw themselves as the elite of the elite, they had not become just any Hindus, they had become "superior Brahmins"; Zoroastrians had joined the highest rung of Indian society.[526]

10.2 A Parsi-Hindu alliance to resist Muslim persecution

The Early History employs a history of common Parsi-Hindu origins in order to create a contemporary alliance between Parsis and Hindus against Muslims. This alliance was a

522 For examples of this dialogue see Sohrabji Mancherji Desai, *Hindu Sutaks in the Zoroastrian Scriptures. Eng. & Gujarati.* (Pp. 38, 23. Dinshaw Mehervan Iràni: Navsari, 1904); Shapurji Kavasji Hodivala, *Zarathushtra and His Contemporaries in the Rigveda, with the Date of Zarathushtra, and the Zarathushtrian Calendar* (Bombay: S. K. Hodiwala, 1913); Shapurji Kavasji Hodivala, *Indo-Iranian Religion (with Parallelisms in the Hindu and Zoroastrian Scriptures)* (Bombay: Shapurji Kavasji Hodivala, 1925); Viccaji Dinshaw, *Origin of Indo-Iranian Myth & Religion* (Bolarum: Author, 1932); Sorabji Naoroji Kanga, *Comparative Study of Religions and Philosophies. I. Heaven and Hell and Their Location in Zoroastrianism and in the Vedas. II. Heaven and Hell and Their Location in Zoroastrianism and in Plato. Being Two Papers Read by Mr. Sorabji Naoroji Kanga ... under the Auspices of the Gatha Society, Bombay.* (Bombay: Fort printing Press, Fort, 1933); Jatindra Mohon Chatterjee, *The Ethical Conceptions of the Gatha,* (Bombay: Jehangir B. Karani's sons, 1935); Jatindra Mohon Chatterjee, *Prisni-Gatha, i.e. the Hymns of Ramachandra and the Hymns of Zarathustra, or the Cream of the Atharva Veda* (Navsari: Anand Sagar Press, 1937); Modi, *The Influence of Iran on Other Countries*; Jatindra Mohon Chatterjee, *Visnu and Mazda* (Calcutta: Bharat Prakash Bhavan, n.d.) Royinton Peer described his contemporary involvement in this dialogue in an interview on 15/7/2013 in Navsari, Gujarat.

523 Pahalanaji Barajoraji Desai, "The Story of Kaikhusru, Its Remarkable Resemblance to the Story of Yudhisthira; and Its Probable Source," in *Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Madressa Jubilee Volume: Papers on Iranian Subjects*, ed. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (Bombay: Printed at the Fort Printing Press, 1914).

524 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*.

525 Spooner.

526 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, ix.

restoration of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* and a revision of *The Parsees'* alliance with the British. Restoration was, in part, due to a historical narrative in which Zoroastrian and Hindu golden-ages had ended with Muslim invasion. Moreover, *The Early History* posited that other non-Parsi Zoroastrian settlements across northern India were destroyed by the same Muslim conquerors that Hindu revivalists held responsible for the conquest of Hindu civilisation.[527] Notably the sources were histories produced by the British. The Parsis' exodus from Iran was explained in familiar terms:

> the fanatical sword of Islam, the followers, of Zoroaster were given the bitter choice of adopting the invaders' creed or of leading their lives as persecuted refugees.[528]

Following the defeat of the Iranians at the hands of the Arabs, *The Early History* recites the most famous anti-Arab line from Iran's national epic the *Shahnama*:

> the eaters of mud-eels and the drinkers of camel's milk had triumphed over the descendants of Jamshid.[529]

Pointedly, the Parsi story of Akbar's conversion by Meherji Rana, which I discussed in the fourth chapter, is revised. The conversion of Emperor Akbar to Zoroastrianism and Hinduism becomes a repudiation of Islam. As Zoroastrians had converted to Islam in Iran, a Muslim converted to Zoroastrianism in India. The most illustrious ruler in the 800 years of Muslim dominance in India is celebrated as an apostate. [530]

Hindus also used this historical knowledge in the cause of Parsi-Hindu solidarity against Muslims. A Bengali Hindu wrote:

> I always take interest in Iranian and Zoroastrian question as a parallel study of the Hindu development of the original Aryan culture. The Hindu Muhammadian question has increased my interest in Iranian culture. And the more I study, the more settled my conviction becomes, that all that is best in Muhammedian civilisation can be traced to Iranian influence and the worst, to Arabia.[531]

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527 Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism a Reader*; Christophe Jaffrelot, *Religion, Caste and Politics in India* (London: Hurst & Co, 2011).

528 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, xiv.

529 Paymaster, 2.

530 Paymaster, 93; Whether Akbar converted was a point of dispute between Modi and Karkaria in the 19th and early 20th centuries. See Nariman, *Dastur Meherji-Rana and the Emperor Akbar, Being a Complete Collection of the Editorials and Contributions Relating to This Controversy Conducted in the Indian Press,*; Ambashthya P. B., *Contributions on Akbar and the Parsees*.

531 Jatindra Mohon Chatterjee, *Zoroastrianism and a Bengali Scholar* (Navsari: Anand Sagar Press, 1930).

For Paymaster and Modi, Zoroastrianism survived because of Hindu munificence in the granting of asylum. History created a sense of contemporary debt and explains their alliance with Hindus and the British. *The Early History* noted that following the end of the last Zoroastrian Empire in Iran, Zoroastrians had also fled to China and England, however only the Parsis had survived. Paymaster wrote:

> It was only fated for those who landed at Diu and a little later found refuge in the Hindu Kingdom of 'Jadi Rana', at Sanjan, to carry on the observance of their religious rites without fear of persecution or molestation, and to leave behind them descendants who have come in the 1200 years that followed to carve for themselves an honourable place in the life of their adopted country.[532]

The *Early History of the Parsees'* account of their first encounter with the Hindu king Jadi Rana differs from Karaka and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* narrates a historic treaty in order to explain sixteenth century Zoroastrianism and power struggles with Akbar's post-Islamic empire. To this end, the present is represented in a historic treaty. However, for Karaka and Paymaster the treaty is an understandable act of deception because it is understood in the context of the time. They both sought to represent the past for the present. For Karaka, the Parsis are dissemblers who deceive the Hindu king lest they remain refugees forever, but for Paymaster, the account of their religion emphasises the similarities with Hinduism.[533] Paymaster argues these were not the tenets of Zoroastrianism they were

> intended more to humour the Hindu ruler and to win his regard and admiration.[534]

Paymaster repeats a line from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* that has become a standard in later Parsi histories but absent from Karaka:

> Parsees will always be friends of India.[535]

Whereas Karaka used the encounter to illustrate the Parsis' adaptability to the British, in *The Early History* it is literal, the Parsis are loyal to Hindu India. *The Early History* is itself an expression of this rediscovered loyalty.

532 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, xiv.
533 Paymaster, 4.
534 Paymaster, 13.
535 Paymaster, 7.

10.3 Inverting stadial history to assert Parsi power

A story of ancient Zoroastrian-Hindu links is tied to an inversion of stadial history, which challenged colonial power by asserting a Zoroastrian modernity far anterior to Europe. This inversion occurred in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Parsis flipped the argument of the missionary Wilson to contend that Zoroastrianism, rather than Christianity, was the first ethical, rational, scientific, and monotheistic religion.[536] Parsis and some Europeans asserted that the Abrahamic religions and the philosophies of Europe were derivative of Zoroastrianism. Using philology they sought to uncover an authentic Zoroastrianism based upon textual knowledge that was free of acculturated Hindu practices and beliefs, which had accumulated during their long contact in Gujarat. It is worth nothing that there was a similar development amongst reformist Hindus who sought to uncover an authentic Hinduism and asserted the superiority of ancient Vedic India relative to Europe.[537] The historical sensibility of this inversion is positivist because it is based upon empirical evidence but also postulates a grand theory of historical development. These claims are part of a challenge to the legitimacy of colonial rule.

Paymaster and Modi inverted stadial history and thus represent a different form of historical consciousness to both *The Parsees* and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. As I illustrated previously, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* did not understand the world within a universal stadial history whereas Karaka did. Karaka and others of his generation understood Parsis to be at an earlier stage because of their fall following the Islamic conquest. It was only due to the Zoroastrian defeat at the hands of Muslims and the encrustation of Hindu traditions that Europeans were currently more advanced. Social reformers argued that in ancient Iran there was no child marriage, women were free, and education was encouraged.[538] However, for Modi and his contemporaries, ancient Iran was more developed then anywhere in the world at the turn of the nineteenth century. Modi takes the colonial narrative of a golden age, fall, and resurrection to its logical conclusion that ancient Iran was more developed.

Modi articulated a stadial understanding in a paper he read before the Anthropological Society of Bombay:

536 Translated from the German into English by a Parsi A Kohut, *The Part Taken by the Parsi Religion in the Formation of Christianity and Judaism* (Bombay: Zeitschrift Der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft, 1899).
537 Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism a Reader*, 29–31.
538 Naoroji, *The Parsee Religion*, 31; Karaka, *The Parsees*, 76.

> An Englishman of the present twentieth century, when he comes to India, and sees, hears, or reads of the customs and manner of the Indians of the present day, feels a little surprised at finding many things strange. But, if he will cast an eye upon a picture of the social customs and manners of his own people of about the fifteenth century, he will find, that in the modern social life of the people of India, he sees, as it were, a reflex of the social life of his ancestors of England about 500 years ago.[539]

He qualified the above statement by distinguishing between the old Parsis of Gujarat who were the subjects of his statement, and the anglicised Parsis of Bombay.[540]

Modi argued that Iran had rapidly passed through the earlier stages and had already entered the highest and latest stage in ancient Iran. In this schema there were five stages: primitive, hunting, pastoral, agricultural, and the final age of Political Society. The final stage was marked by

> modern forms of oligarchy or democracy, monarchy or republicanism. Iran has all along accepted the Monarchical form of Government.[541]

Modi disputed the European assertion that Iran was despotic and at an earlier stage because ancient Iran possessed the four attributes that mark civilisation: justice, security, tolerance, and knowledge.[542]

Modi presented numerous papers to the Anthropological Society expressing this inversion. For instance, he claimed that Christmas was adulterated and inspired by Mithraism, one of the pre-Zoroastrian and pre-Hindu deities of their common Indo-Iranian ancestors.[543] Following the Russian revolution he proffered a sixth century Iranian example of how a communist impulse in Iran vastly predated Europe's experience, he argued that the theory of evolution existed in ancient Iranian literature, that the French revolutionary calendar was based upon the ancient Zoroastrian calendar, and that the ideas of the Italian poet Dante were derivative of ancient Iranian thought.[544] Crucially different

539 Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *Anthropological Papers: Part IV*, vol. 4 (Bombay: British India Press, 1929), 1.
540 Gujarati Parsis are referred to as the moffusil.
541 Modi, *The Influence of Iran on Other Countries*, 30.
542 The European academic is Profesor Flanders Patrie. See Modi, 34.
543 Modi, 84–90; Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, "THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL: An Ancient Parsi Feast TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES OF INDIA," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, December 29, 1917.
544 Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, "THE BOLSHEVISM OF RUSSIA: A Persian Prototype TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES OF INDIA," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, April 28, 1919; Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, "The Germ of the Evolution Theory in Old Iranian Literature," in *Anthropological Papers: Part IV*, vol. 4 (Bombay: British India Press, 1929), 30–41; Modi, *The K.R. Cama memorial volume essays on Iranian subjects*,

from Karaka was how women were used as a marker of a society's stage of development. Whereas for Karaka the status of women and explained British conquest, for Modi the "very high position" if not equality of women in ancient Iran established the superiority of Zoroastrianism and Parsis.[545]

Modi was not alone as there were other Parsis who adapted positivism by inverting stadial history. For instance, in 1901 it was argued that the positivism of the French philosopher Auguste Comte was derivative of the teachings of Zarathustra:

> Thus Zoroastrianism, more than any other religion of antiquity, holds before humanity the worship of humanity as thorough and as grand as that which the Positivist religion enforces upon its disciples; but, at the same time, Zoroastrianism does not dethrone God by substituting humanity in the place of Divinity as is done in the system of Comte. The religious system of Comte, then, may be said to be the latest attempt at creating a universal religion, unconsciously copying its essential principal from one of the earliest if not the earliest of religions and Philosophical systems.[546]

This quote epitomises how Parsis came to see themselves as the progenitors of modernity. It was not the Parsis who were historically behind the Europeans, rather Europeans were catching up with the Parsis. This was an assertion of Parsi power that was possible because Parsis were augmented by a philological method.

10.4 Biography and a thematic narrative structure

A Parsi realignment away from the British is also expressed in the narrative structure *The Early History*. Whereas the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* adapted a Zoroastrian sensibility to Indo-Persian, and *The Parsees* revised the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* structure to a Christian narrative structure of Eden, fall and resurrection; in the case of *The Early History*, the narrative trope is explicitly adapted from an analogy of the "American Pilgrim fathers" to "our Indian Pilgrim fathers".[547] This is not to say that the fall from a golden age is now absent, it is still there as

146; "PRECURSORS OF DANTE: Paper by Mr. J. J. Modi," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, August 28, 1911; Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *Dante Papers: Viraf, Adamnan, and Dante and Other Papers.* (Bombay: Shams-ul-Ulma Dr. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, 1914).

545 For example, Martin Haug and Edward William West. See Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *Wisdom from a Life-Time*, trans. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia (Mumbai: Y.C.Z.A. Educational and Charitable Fund, 2005), 285–95.

546 Jehangir Sorabji Taleyarkhan, *Comte & the Positive Philosophy.* (Thacker & co.- Bombay., 1901), 96.

547 Modi, *Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.*, 13.

part of a pact with Hindus, however the emphasis is different. Whereas in the case of Karaka, the British resurrect the Parsis, for Paymaster, the Parsis resurrect themselves.

Broadly, *The Early History* is ordered thematically, which is similar to the thematic chapters of *The Parsees* but different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* chronology that lacked chapters. *The Early History* is divided into fourteen thematic, which can be broadly group into three sections corresponding to different types of historical writing. The first section is a chronological ethnic national narrative over two chapters covering the very early history of the community where few sources are available:

1. "The Parsee Pilgrim Fathers" debates the origin of the community, how they came to be in India and the story of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*.
2. "The first 700 years: an obscure period" examines the Parsis very early history in India drawing upon the story of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and meagre corroborating sources.

The second section is a discussion of events in which there are sources other than the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*:

3. "Traveller's accounts" details the views of early European travellers who met the Parsis.
4. "The Revayats" discuses a series of correspondences between Parsis and their Zoroastrian brethren in Iran.
5. "Important events relating to Parsees in India from 1400 to 1700 A.D."
6. "Parsees influence on Akbar's faith"
7. "Riots at Navsari" examines disputes between the two major branches of the Parsi priesthood.
8. "Agreements and Epistles" discusses the reconciliation of these two branches.

The third section contains biographical accounts of various Parsis:

9. "Distinguished Parsees: Biographical notes"
10. "Dastur Meherjiran (1536-1591)"
11. "Rustom Manek Seth"
12. "Azar Kaivan, Mehrvaid, Nanabhai Punjia, The Desais"
13. "The Early Literature of the Parsees"
14. "Parsee writers and poets"

I will briefly reflect upon biography because individual Parsis came to be understood as representatives of the entire community and also as examples of the community's fulfilment of the pact for asylum. Biography became popular amongst Parsis in the second half of the nineteenth century when they began producing a number of biographies of individual Parsis and as part of collected biographies. Earlier biographical accounts used individual Parsis as examples of the community's loyalty and contribution to the colonial world.[548] In the early twentieth century biographical accounts of Parsis came to signify an alliance not with the British, but with India. Indian nationalists used collected and individual biographies of the heroes of the movement, which included Parsis such as Dadabhai Naoroji.[549]

10.5 Print, a sense of distance, and representing the past for the present

The historical consciousness of *The Early History* can be summarised as a contemporary narrative representation of the past using sources from the past for a contemporary audience. Central to this sensibility is the augmentation of philology and print because they created the capacity to understand events within their own time. Whereas the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* allegorically represented the present in the past, *The Parsees* represented Parsi practices of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in the past, *The Early History* seeks to represent the past in its time. Paymaster expresses one of the principles of modern European historiography: an understanding of events and people in their time, and their representation in narrative form.

548 The first biography I found of a Parsi was written in 1855 by an Englishman about Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the famous Parsi merchant and first Indian knight who featured in chapter five and six. Ramsay Williamson, *Memorandum of the Life and Public Charities of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy* (London: Printed by J.E. Taylor, 1855), http://archive.org/details/cu31924024058137; Parsis begin writing biographies of illustrious members of the own community from 1865. *Facts Respecting Bhimjee Jeevanjee: The Parsee Physcian to the Poor* (Bombay: Commercial Press, 1865); Nazir, *The First Parsee Baronet : Being Passages from the Life and Fortunes of the Late Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Baronet*; *The Death of Bomanjee Hormarjee Wadia* (Bombay: Imperial Press, 1871); Sir Cowasji Jehangir, *Life of Sir Cowasjee Jehanghier Readymoney.* (London: Printed by the London Stereoscopic and Photographic Co.], 1890); Gidumal, *Behramji M. Malabari; Biographical Sketch*; Nowrozjee Sorabji, *The Life of Sorabjee Bengallee : Bengallee* (Bombay Times of India Press, 1893), http://www.archive.org/details/lifeofsorabjeebe00benguoft; Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, *The Life and Life Work of J.N. Tata* (Madras Ganesh, 1915), http://archive.org/details/lifelifeworkofjn00wachuoft; Shavaksha Hormusji Jhabvala, *Framji Cowasji Banaji: A Great Parsi* (Bombay: B.S. Banaji, 1920); Shavaksha Hormusji Jhabvala, *Life Sketches of the Late Mr Cowasji Dinshaw, C.I.E., and of Sir Hormusji Cowasji Dinshaw, Kt., M.V.O., O.B.E.* (Bombay: S.H. Jhabvala, 1923); Shavaksha Hormusji Jhabvala, *Sorabjee Shapurjee Bengalli: A Great Social Reformer*, 1920; From 1886 they started producing collected biographies of other Parsis or eminent Indians. Jalbhoy, *The Portrait Gallery of Western India, Embellished with 51 Life-like Portraits of the Princes, Chiefs, and Nobles, from Celebrated Artists in London; Enriched with Historical, Political and Biographical Accounts from the Most Authentic Sources, in Gujarati and English.*; Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*.

549 *Dadabhai Naoroji*; Bannerjea, *India's Nation Builders*; Natesan, *Famous Parsis: Biographical & Critical Sketches of Patriots, Philanthropists, Politicians, Reformers, Scholars, and Captains of Industry*; Lalitmohan Chatterjee and Syamaprasada Mukhopadhyaya, *Representative Indians* (Calcutta: A.C. Dhar, 1931).

I propose that a sense of historical distance is created by a historian's augmentation with philology and the remediation of manuscript sources to print. A method to represent the past for the present is dependent upon the durability and reproducibility of sources to transmit the past through time. By contrast, if sources change drastically in their transmission through time they can offer an understanding of what happened but limit the capacity of a historian to engage a method to transport the reader back in time. In an oral story-telling tradition the constant process of its retelling for a contemporary audience and in response to contemporary challenges transforms the story. It is always a projection of the present onto the past as I discussed in the case of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, which remediated a fluid oral story as it existed in 1599. This is different for *The Early History* which revises knowledge gathered from the remediation of ancient manuscript sources that have been transmitted through time because of their durability. A philological reading of each text creates a window into the past that orality cannot provide. While there are questions over the interpretation of ancient texts and the process of their representation in narrative form, they constitute fundamentally different categories of sources.

Philology allows the imaginative transporting of the reader into the past and creates a granular sense of change over time as well as a sense of distance. Philology mapped the historical relationship between different Zoroastrian texts based on the antiquity of the language, which was a different way of knowing Zarathustra and Zoroastrianism compared to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. The origin of Zoroastrianism was understood to be in the deep antiquity of universal time. Using a philological understanding of sources a historical narrative could create a sense of distance to the past because the narrated events and people were separated from the reader by a chasm of time. To borrow a well-worn phrase: the past became a foreign country.[550]

Importantly, the different source media used in the revisions create different types of immediacy and different senses of distance. It is helpful to contrast the three revisions studied so far. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* seeks to create a sense of immediacy with an oral story from 1599 transporting the reader into that time, and *The Parsees'* immediacy is with the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* vision from 1599, which again transports the reader into 1599. But *The Early History* remediates a vast collection of print, manuscript, and archaeological sources. As a result *The Early History* creates a sense of immediacy with multiple sources produced over more than a millennia thus transporting the reader through eras of time. When we combine these different senses of immediacy with the temporal location of their

550 It has been argued that this sense of distance and difference is one of the innovations of Western historiography. See Schiffman, *The Birth of the Past*; Kemp, *The Estrangement of the Past*.

audiences, we can then surmise that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* seeks to transport a future reader to the year 1599, The Parsees transports a contemporary reader to 1599, and *The Early History* seeks to transport a contemporary reader over vast stretches of time. The result is different sense of distance. Thus, in part, the sense of distance created by a medium is related to the medium it seeks to create immediacy with. From this analysis we can make a surprising conclusion, a sense of distance is not related to how long ago the narrated events took place, but the medium from which these events are sourced. We can then postulate that a historical narrative describing events occurring a thousand years before that is sourced from an oral source will seem less distant than a narrative describing events from a century ago that is sourced from print or manuscript.

Distance is further heightened by each medium's different augmentation of human memory. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* oral immediacy reproduced the fragility of orality, its lack of durability and mnemonic strategies to transmit the story through time. By contrast, *The Parsees* and *The Early History* are not concerned with memorability because the medium of manuscript is more permanent and print is far more accessible. Mnemonic techniques are not required with print as the medium remembers without human intervention. The reproducibility of print creates a textual stability and a sense of distance by allowing both the author and reader to perceive the small steps of time. One can perceive a sense of distance because our ideas have changed; that ideas are not universal but are contingent upon time and place. Ideas develop and change through a process of causation and it is this sense of change combined with the echo of the past in the present that allow us to experience a sense of distance.

A sense of distance is also linked to the locating events in a universal time. Dates allow the reader to locate the limited span of their own life in the much larger context of centuries of historical change. The contrast of the temporal shortness of our own existence and the length of the events narrated in print history allow us to comprehend, or at least recognise, the distance to the past. The change the reader has experienced over decades can be juxtaposed with change over centuries. The implications of the focus on dates for historical consciousness is to give the reader a sense of distance to the past.

Exact dates are central to *The Early History* but unimportant for the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and *The Parsees*. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* had only the date of its composition, and *The Parsees* uses rounded dates prior to the arrival of the British and afterwards a Christian calendar. The centrality of dating for the historical sensibility of *The Early History* can be seen in the following quote:

> The whole question of the date of the first arrival of the Parsees in India constitutes one of the major problems of history.[551]

For Paymaster the characters of history are introduced with the year of their birth and death. For instance:

> The Parsees, to-day, are for the most part descended from the settlers who came as refugees: after the battle of Nehavand, (in 641 A.D.)[552]

This sensibility developed over the course of the nineteenth century. Since 1826 Parsis have debated the date of their arrival in India but in the early twentieth century these disputes reached a fever pitch.[553]

Dating and a historical method of corroboration are intimately linked due to the accessibility and reproducibility of print sources. We can see by comparing the research process of Bahman and Karaka with Modi and Paymaster. Bahman had only one oral source at his disposal and hence the possibility of corroboration was limited. In part, the different sensibilities of *The Early History* and *The Parsees* are due to the how removed they are from the inauguration of the printing press in India. Karaka wrote at a time when the printing press was gathering pace and there would have been some print sources. By the time Modi and Paymaster started researching their history the printing press was well established and there would have been a far greater quantity of sources at their disposal. In essence, the effects of print take generations to become apparent because time is required to print a vast quantity of sources. With a greater quantity of sources Modi and Paymaster would have had a greater capacity to corroborate and locate events from disparate sources into a chronology.

Furthermore, the convention of using historical quotations creates a sense of distance. Paymaster quotes historical sources from the time being discussed whereas Karaka quotes contemporary sources. The foreignness of the expression allows the reader to perceive the foreignness of the time. For instance, Paymaster quotes liberally from Muslim histories produced during the reign of Akbar and before. The quotations' celebration of the Islamic ascendancy and conquest seems out-of-place today; the same would have been true in the early twentieth century when the idea of the triumph of

551 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, 5.
552 Paymaster, xi.
553 Aspandiarji Kamdinji, *Kadim Tarikha Parshioni Kasara* (Surat, 1826); Modi, *A Few Events in the Early History of the Parsis and Their Dates*; Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*.

liberalism and Western civilisation was at its peak. For instance, Paymaster quotes from a history produced early in Akbar's reign:

> The Sultan turned his face towards Hindustan, and conquered many towns and forts, and amongst them was a city exceedingly populous inhabited by a tribe of Khorasani descent, whom Afrasayab had expelled from their native country. It was so completely reduced by the power and perseverance of the Sultan that he took away no less than 100,000 captives.[554]

Print also allows longer texts because little needs to be remembered and thus a greater sense of distance. A longer text transports the reader by detailing the intricacies of the time. I am not suggesting that there is a one to one relationship between a text's length and distance as there are always a combination of factors in the creation of a particular form of historical consciousness. A short account can transport the reader through beautiful allegorical prose. Both *The Parsees* and *The Early History* have similar lengths with 72251 and 74934 words respectively. Although it should be noted that the historical section of *The Parsees* is 10577 words long, roughly double that of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. By contrast *The Early History* is about the past and a greater sense of distance is a result of this length, the quantity of sources, dating, conventions such as quotations, and the method.

In summary, *The Early History* adapted philology to understand the common origins of Zoroastrians and Hindus, and combined this with a historical understanding of their mutual fall at the hands of Muslims. It inverts stadial history to assert a Zoroastrian modernity far anterior to Europe. Ancient Iran was understood as the future of Europe and the Parsis were restoring their ancient grandeur. The combination of philology and print created a sense of distance to the past and its representation for the present. Print not only creates the possibility of transporting a contemporary reader into the past, print creates a different history knowing agent because it augments our memory's capacity to transport information through time.

554 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, ix.

11. Questioning the historical accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*

The question of historical accuracy is central to *The Early History* and the column debates because the conventions of the time dictated that for a narrative to be considered historical it ought to be premised upon sources that could be corroborated. No one in these debates disputed whether historical accuracy is important or whether there are alternate methods for acquiring the raw material of a historical story. Both sides in the debate were driven by the same empirical historical sensibility. Their point of disagreement centred on the other sides implementation of what they took to be the only possible historical method. The column debates were a historiographical dispute over what constituted a legitimate historical account, in which the question of the historical and ahistorical became excessively pronounced.

It is important to note that although the authors of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, *The Parsees*, and *The Early History* all used different methods to acquire the raw material of the past and represent it in narrative form, they all express a method. In the case of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* the raw material is acquired and authenticated by the priestly oral tradition for the transmission of Zoroastrian knowledge. *The Parsees* is sourced from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and supported by the research of European scholars. By contrast, the raw material of *The Early History* is acquired from research into a vast collection of manuscript, print, and archaeological sources that are read corroboratively. All three are manifestations of different forms of historical consciousness; but to ask whether one is more accurate than the other misses the point. The question that drove the column debates assumes a particular empirical view of history, and projects that understanding onto the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. Yet what makes a work historical is not which method it uses, but that it uses a method that differentiates its account from a fictional one for their audience.

In this chapter I ask, how and why did the column debates provoke historical revisions such as *The Early History*? I propose these debate centred on a normative question of what constitutes history. The very fact that these debates occurred indicates a more general shift in historical conventions and these debates were part of a process by which the more specific case of Parsi historical consciousness was transformed. The shift underway was towards positivism, or a form of empiricism, that I link to print. Empiricism is central to the column debates and how Parsis at the time conceived the history as a question of accuracy, which manifested in an explicit method for historical

research and writing. As a result of this shift combined with the challenge to colonial rule and Iran's reconciliation with its Zoroastrian past, the use of print, a new augmented historian was created, print-history-modi-paymaster.

11.1 The print-history-human and the question of evidence

As the nineteenth century progressed an empirical historical sensibility became normative in Europe and amongst the Indian elite. In this view, history was based upon sources that experienced the time and events, which could be corroborated by an explicit method. In short, history became scientific because it was based upon reproducible evidence.[555] The marker that came to distinguish history from other branches of literature was an unwavering commitment to evidence, or as E. H. Carr pithily states "The nineteenth century was a great age for facts."[556] Historical accuracy became central.

In the fifteen years before Modi began work on *The Early History*, Parsis engaged in two particularly acrid disputes over historical accuracy, and Modi was a central protagonist in both. The first questioned whether the Zoroastrian priest who engaged in the dialogues at Akbar's court of religions was the Parsi priest from Navsari named Meherji Rana or a Zoroastrian from Iran.[557] The second concerned the acceptance of converts to Zoroastrianism. This debate centred on what was perceived as an understanding of authentic Zoroastrianism, which were the practices of Zarathustra rather than the accumulated tradition. These practices could be discerned by understanding Zarathustra's teachings in the context of his time and in his language in order to distinguish the Parsi practices that were acculturated from Hindus.[558]

In the early twentieth century an empirical sensibility is expressed in the historical writings of many Parsis including the authors of *The Early History*.[559] Modi's first systematic chronology of the Parsis in India was published in Parsi newspapers in 1903 and then as a

555 Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century from Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, 2–3.
556 Edward Hallett Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).
557 Ambashthya P. B., *Contributions on Akbar and the Parsees*; Nariman, *Dastur Meherji-Rana and the Emperor Akbar, Being a Complete Collection of the Editorials and Contributions Relating to This Controversy Conducted in the Indian Press,*.
558 Mitra Sharafi, "JUDGING CONVERSION TO ZOROASTRIANISM Behind the Scenes of the Parsi Panchayat Case (1908)," in *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, ed. Alan Williams and John R. Hinnells (New York: Routledge, 2007); Sharafi, *Colonial Parsis and Law*.
559 In addition to the other works cited below. See Hodivala, *Zarathushtra and His Contemporaries in the Rigveda, with the Date of Zarathushtra, and the Zarathushtrian Calendar*; Hodivala, *Indo-Iranian Religion (with Parallelisms in the Hindu and Zoroastrian Scriptures)*; Shapurji Kavasji Hodivala, *Parsis of Ancient India* (Bombay: Shapurji Kavasji Hodivala, 1920); Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*; Shapurji Aspaniarji Kapadia, *The Teachings of Zoroaster, and the Philosophy of the Parsi Religion* (London: J. Murray, 1913); Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism*; Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Civilization: From the Earliest Times to the Downfall of the Last Zoroastrian Empire 651 AD*.

book in 1905. This book continues to be reprinted to this day as *A Few Events in the Early History of the Parsis and Their Dates*.[560]

I propose that at a general level, an empirical sensibility can be explained by the medium of print and the creation of the print-history-human. This is because the reproducibility and accessibility of print allowed mass access to standardised primary sources and a common ground for debate over historical facts. The mass production of identical, standardised texts, and their proliferation in large libraries created a method of corroboration. Printed books and documents on a wide variety of topics could be brought together for one reader, which led to not only the cross-fertilisation of ideas but a wealth of source material for comparison.[561] Standardisation was not only in newly produced historical works but in the reproduction of older sources. The printed translation of Muslim histories of India and other texts broadened access and a comprehension of the iterative sequence of Muslim histories.[562] Mass distribution of the same primary and secondary sources allowed discussion on the same text over vast distances in a uniform language through translation.[563]

For Parsis, the remediation and translation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* to English print standardised the poem and its accessibility created debate. Previously it was only accessible to the priests who had the few copies. But remediation to print led to standardisation and page numbers, which allowed a debate about the same text. The first printed publication was in the journal of the Asiatic Society, which allowed debates over the origin of the Parsis and in turn led to new translations and printed versions. One of the prerequisites for the debate was the naming of the work. Prior to print only one of the manuscript copies had the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* scribbled at the top the first page, which was done by a copyist. It is with print that Bahman's poem becomes universally known as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and its historical accuracy debated.[564]

A debate over facts became central because print changed the relationship between history and human memory. Whereas for the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* the function of a historical narrative was to remember the past due to the echo of an oral sensibility's lack of durability, with print the past was reliably recorded in the vast proliferation of sources. The focus of historical narrative shifted. The style and structure no longer required mnemonic

560 Modi, *A Few Events in the Early History of the Parsis and Their Dates*.
561 Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 71–72.
562 Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India*.
563 Developed from the reflections of Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 81.
564 The Qesse-ye Sanjan was not the only source. A community chronicle whose composition began in the mid nineteenth century collated as much information about the community and its history, which was also printed. See Patell, Parsee Prakash.

strategies to transmit the narrative from person to person. The focus of history changed to a debate over what happened rather than seeking to remember what happened.

11.2 Debating a column to remember persecution

It was in this empiricist milieu that a French scholar who studied the Parsis named Delphine Menant proposed a monument.[565] She had visited Sanjan in 1901 and eight years later wrote:[566]

> We are astonished (to find) that the Parsees have upto now neglected to raise a commemorative monument to mark the place of the landing of their ancestors and the place where the sacred Fire burnt for the first time in India. It is a neglect which can be easily remedied and certainly there will be a day, when a pious Zoroastrian, solicitous for the past, will make an appeal for it to his co-religionists.[567]

Menant's father was a scholar of Zoroastrianism and had been in contact with Modi's mentor Cama.[568] Modi had visited her house in Paris when she was young to converse with her father on questions of Zoroastrianism. She continued her father's interest, composing a history of the Parsis in 1898, which was translated from French into English by a Parsi in 1917, and is still reprinted to this day.[569]

Following Menant's proposal, Modi took it upon himself to canvas the possibility of building a monument with leading members of the community.[570] In 1910 they formed a committee of 21 men and published their intentions to build a memorial. Yet in a Parsi newspaper doubts were expressed about the veracity of their tradition. As a result the committee appointed a sub-committee "of expert students of history"[571] to look into the question. The sub-committee included Modi and Paymaster.[572] The sub-committee

565 Menant wrote in 1898 Delphine Menant, *The Parsis*, trans. Murzban Muncherji Murzban (Mumbai: Danai, 1994); D. Menant, "Zoroastrianism and the Parsis," *The North American Review* 172, no. 530 (January 1, 1901): 132–47.

566 "Visits to Sanjan and Udwada," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 11, 1901.

567 Cited and translated by Modi from the French in Extract from Miss Menant's paper entitled "La prise de Sanjan par les Musalmans" (Revue du Monde Musalman, 38 Anne, Juin, No. 6. [Last para p. 179]. Modi, *Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.*

568 Edwardes, *Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, 1831-1909: A Memoir*, 16.

569 Menant, *The Parsis*.

570 Amongst them were some of the most influential members of the community ranging from Jamsetjee Jejeeebhoy, Dinshaw Manockji Petit, Cowasji Jehangir, Pherozeshah Mehta, Ratan Tata, and Dorabji Tata.

571 Modi, *Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.*, 3.

572 Also on the sub-committee was a high priest plus Rustomji Karkaria, who had previously debated with Modi whether Meherji Rana had met Akbar, and Palanji Desai, who produced histories of ancient Aryan Parsi-Hindu contacts. See Rustomji Pestonji Karkaria, "Akbar and the Parsis: To the Editor of the Times

produced a report affirming the tradition and recommending that a column should be erected at Sanjan, began collecting funds, and sought submissions for its design. The sub-committee also proposed the inscription quoted at the beginning of chapter nine, which was the aspect of the column that was to prove the most controversial leading to voluminous disputes in newspapers, journals, and meetings.[573]

The key opponents of the column came from within the Iranian Association. The association was formed in 1910 in order to counter heterodox trends in Parsi religiosity.[574] It was founded by Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla (1875-1956), a scholar-priest who had recently returned from Columbia University where he had completed his doctoral dissertation under an American scholar of Zoroastrianism.[575] Dhalla commenced his career as an orthodox priest but transformed into a reformer during his doctorate. He later became a leading member of the community writing key books on the history of Zoroastrianism, which are still widely read today.[576] Like other reformers, he sought to understand Zoroastrianism as a historical development and sought to uncover the authentic teachings of Zarathustra free of Hindu encrustations. Significantly for Dhalla, a native of the Muslim majority Karachi, it was the Arabs who brought down the Sasanian Empire, not Muslims.[577]

The opponents of the column disputed the historical accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. The first to oppose the column from within the Iranian Association was Jamshedji Dadabhai Nadir-Shah. He argued that their ancestors had been living in India since antiquity and were not refugees fleeing either the Arabs or Islamicising Iran. He built upon the research of Desai, one of the members of the sub-committee, concerning the pre-Islamic contacts between Zoroastrians and Hindus. Desai disputed this use of his research.[578] At the 1912 conference of the Iranian Association Nadir-Shah delivered a paper arguing:

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of India," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, December 22, 1897; Nariman, *Dastur Meherji-Rana and the Emperor Akbar, Being a Complete Collection of the Editorials and Contributions Relating to This Controversy Conducted in the Indian Press,*; "Mr. Desai on the First Parsees in India"; Desai, *History of the Achaemenides, being a chronicle of the Parsee monarchs of the Achaemenian dynasty of ancient Persia*; Desai, *Hindu Sutaks in the Zoroastrian Scriptures. Eng. & Gujarati.*; Pahalanaji Barajoraji Desai, *The Kisseh Sanjan and the Parsi Colony at Sanjan an Historical Review* (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1908).

573 Modi, *Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.*, 2–4.

574 This was the influence of Theosophy.

575 William Jackson.

576 Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (New York: n.p., 1914); Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Civilization: From the Earliest Times to the Downfall of the Last Zoroastrian Empire 651 AD*; Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism*.

577 Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology*, 297.

578 Desai, *The Kisseh Sanjan and the Parsi Colony at Sanjan an Historical Review*.

> Not a single reliable history has been written of the Zoroastrian community after the extermination of the Sasanian Empire. In the absence of such a history the Parsis believe without ascertaining the truth, a kissah [legend] written three centuries ago, as a history of their advent to and settlement in India, but by our present historical knowledge derived from other sources we find this kissah to be wholly fictitious.[579]

In 1916 the Iranian Association sent a letter to Modi as the secretary of the "Sanjan Memorial Column Committee." They used Nadir-Shah's argument to oppose the wording on the memorial, objecting to the inscription's definitiveness that added weight to the "Kissah-i-Sanjan as historically and incontestably true". They wrote:

> The Iranian Association beg to point out that your Committee should not announce as a proved historical fact on the column at Sanjan what is professedly an oral tradition given in the "Kissah-i-Sanjan" which has not yet been corroborated by historical or archaeological evidence. To do so would give a false colour to doubtful events and hamper future research into the early history of the Parsis in India.[580]

In Modi's 1917 reply he explicitly outlines an empirical historical method in order to verify the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. He noted that there were three general principles for determining whether a given narrative is or is not historical. Firstly, where different writers mention the same fact, that fact is to be considered reliable. Secondly, if there is no corroborating evidence of an event, one must inquire whether there is any evidence which contradicts it. And thirdly, where allusions to events that are secondary to the narrative are known to be trustworthy, this may further support the narrative, suggesting corroboration through authority which is similar to Karaka.[581] Citing these principles, he marshalled vast quantities of corroborating material, much of negligible value, in order to defend the poem's historical accuracy.

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579 J. D. Nadersha, "The 'Kessah-e-Sanjan,' and Dr. Jivanji Modi," *Journal of the Iranian Association* 6, no. 9 (December 1917): 346.

580 This letter from the president and secretaries of the Iranian Association H. J. Bhabha, P. A. Wadia, Byrmaji Hormusjee in November 1916 is reproduced in Modi, *Dastur Bahman Kaikobad and the Kisseh-i-Sanjan. A Reply.*, 83.

581 Modi, 10.

11.3 Historical responses to the question of persecution

Nariman was the other key opponent of the column and in chapter nine I discussed how he sought reconciliation with Iranian Muslims.[582] Here I will examine his argument, which is different from Nadir-Shah's. Nariman argues that Muhammad and his immediate followers did not force Iranians to convert to Islam because Zoroastrians were viewed by Arabs as monotheists in the Abrahmic tradition, or similar to Christians and Jews, thus entitled to protection. Zoroastrians had to pay the jizya poll tax because they were not Muslims, but were also exempted from military service that was compulsory for Muslims. Nariman argues that conversion to Islam was more complex with a host of different reasons. For example:

> One of the causes of the downfall of Zoroastrian monarchy of the Sasanians was the bigotry of the Mobeds.[583]

Another reason was wealthy Zoroastrian families converted in order to maintain their former status with the new Muslim rulers. Some Zoroastrians converted as part of family disputes or in order to gain career advancement. These individual converts would then pressure their relatives in order to eliminate "the stigma of apostacy."[584] Nariman's position was based on a reading of the *Quran,* early treaties between the Islamic Prophet Muhammad and Zoroastrian states, and conjecture.[585] Nariman's opposition is cited in the *Early History of the Parsees*, and he debated the received tradition in newspapers, journals and Parsi forums.

This attack on the accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* provoked an outpouring of historical writing in its defence, of which *The Early History* is one. In 1915 Paymaster produced an English and Gujarati translation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* which he dedicated to Modi.[586] Modi produced an English translation of an eighteenth century revision of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*.[587] In 1920 a Parsi professor of history produced another prose English translation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* where he sought to authenticate the account using corroborating sources.[588] Another Parsi historian produced a Gujarati revision of the

582 Nariman and Paymaster, *Writings of G. K. Nariman (Orientalist and Linguist)*, ii–iii.
583 Mobeds are Zoroastrian priests Nariman and Paymaster, viii.
584 Nariman and Paymaster, 177–78.
585 Nariman and Paymaster, 163–69.
586 Paymaster, *Kisse-i-Sanjan*.
587 Shapurji Maneckji Sanjana and Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *Qisseh-i Zartûshtiân Hindûstan va Bayân-i Âtash Behrâm-i Naosari* (Bombay: Fort Print. Press, 1934).
588 Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*.

Qesse-ye Sanjan using corroborating sources and also an account of ancient Iranian and Indian links.[589] There were also vitriolic debates in newspapers[590]

One of the other key actors was Rustom Burjorji Paymaster (1870-1943), co-author of *The Early History*. Paymaster was a lawyer who had graduated from the University of Bombay and also trained as a journalist. He had a keen interest in history and from 1890 he was involved with and eventually became the editor of the *Parsee Prakash,* the central chronicle of the community and an invaluable historical source.[591] Paymaster wrote biographical sketches of famous Parsis for newspapers, published a number of books on historical subjects, and also sought to develop a Parsi museum.[592]

Later histories disputing the accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* built upon the argument of Desai and Nadir-Shah that the Parsis were already in India prior to the defeat of the Sasanians. Another account disputed that Zoroastrians were persecuted in Iran and led to yet another English translation of the poem, titled *The story of Sanjan: or, The supposed history of Parsi migration to India from Khorasan.*[593] Another history titled *Kisse-Sanjan. A palpable falsehood* disputed that Parsis fled in the face of the Arab invasion writing about the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*:

> This spurious and unauthentic story of Sanjan has been accepted by many a learned Parsi and Non-Parsi scholar as a serious historical work, although its fallacies are challenged more than once on the authorities of historical facts, with the result that many Parsis are misled to believe that the Zoroastrian immigrants were cowards who fled from their mother-land leaving their king and country to the mercy of the Arab invaders.[594]

The Early History responds to these critiques by adopting a staunchly empiricist historical sensibility. The authors sought to validate the factuality of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and

589 Shapurji Kavasji Hodivala, *Extracts from History of Holy Iranshah* (Bombay: Trustees of the Funds and Properties Parsi Punchayet, 1966); Hodivala, *Parsis of Ancient India*; Hodivala, *Indo-Iranian Religion (with Parallelisms in the Hindu and Zoroastrian Scriptures)*.

590 "CURRENT TOPICS: A Romance of Sanjan," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, March 26, 1919.

591 R. P. M, "Annals of the Parsis," *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, February 10, 1940, sec. Literature of the Day.

592 Paymaster, *Kisse-i-Sanjan*; Paymaster, *Navroziana, or, The Dawn of a New Era*; Jehangir Dordi and Rustom Barjorjee Paymaster, *A Farman of Emperor Jehangir given to Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji's Ancestors Three Centuries Ago: And a Short History of His Dordi Family of Navsari with Poems on Dadabhai Naoroji by Rustam Barjorji* (Bombay: The editor, 1925); Rustom Burjorji Paymaster, *Kisse-i-Gulestanbanu: A Short Account of the Arrival of the Distinguished Zoroastrians in India from Iran during the Last Two Centuries*, 1940; Rustom Burjorji Paymaster, "A Parsi Museum: To the Editor of 'the Times of India.,'" *The Times of India (1861-Current)*, July 13, 1933.

593 Merwan Sorab Irani and Bahman ibn Kaiqubad, *The Story of Sanjan: Or, The Supposed History of Parsi Migration to India from Khorasan* (Poona: M.S. Irani, 1943).

594 Bhathena, *Kisse-Sanjan. A Palpable Falsehood.*, i.

the received tradition. The question of religious persecution is dealt with in the footnotes noting Nariman's position.[595] The date of the arrival of the Parsis in India is debated drawing upon Modi's research. Using corroborating evidence the authors affirm the existence of the Hindu King named Jadi Rana whom they met on arrival, the Parsi priest who met him, the port where they first arrived. The pact trading asylum for loyalty and acculturation is supported with a discussion of an old Parsi manuscript, which detailed the exposition of Zoroastrianism the priest gave to Jadi Rana as part of the treaty for asylum.[596] The authors seek to establish the date of the consecration of the Parsis most revered fire-temple, the Iranshah, using multiple sources. They acknowledge the controversies "about the accuracy of the facts" in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. It is however deemed a

> sincere attempt at history-writing, even though it may not be perfect in its chronology.[597]

It is important to note that no one in these debates sought to understand the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* as a poem belonging to late sixteenth century India. Both sides anachronistically questioned whether it was a work of modern history however, in sixteenth century India there was no concept of modern European history. They all used the same conventions for determining what a historical work was but disagreed about the use of these conventions. No one claimed that accuracy was unimportant or that there were alternate methods and conventions for sourcing a historical narrative.

11.4 A column-history-human

It is worthwhile to briefly reflect upon the relationship between empiricism and a column as a medium for both historical narration and as a source. Although I have studied textual histories, the Sanjan column is a form of history telling. The debates surrounding the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* were tied to a shift in historiographical conventions with the rise of empiricism and the use of print, but they were also linked to the qualities of the column as a medium. The building of columns as a very old endeavour and the Sanjan column can be seen as both a homage to ancient Zoroastrian columns in Iran and also an imitation of British column building.

In part the intensity of the debates was due to the characteristics of the column as a medium. When we examine the column through the framework I have advanced we can

595 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, 3.
596 This is the *Sixteen Sanskrit Slokas*.
597 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, 4.

see that it has a low degree of accessibility, a low degree of reproducibility, but a very high degree durability. Accessibility is low relative to print because only people who see the column know its historical narrative. Reproducibility is low because the capacity to reproduce identical copies is less than any media studied in this thesis. But the durability of columns is outstanding as the remnants of the first Zoroastrian empire in ancient Iran in Persepolis attest. Persepolis was destroyed by Alexander the Great, yet the columns remain and they are pictured in illustration eight.

Illustration 8: Jesse Buck, *Persepolis*, photo, October 2005, Persepolis, Iran.

However the historical consciousness of the Persepolis columns and the Sanjan column are different because they are produced by different historiographical agents. The action that created the Sanjan column as a history knowing medium was the convergence of the empiricist turn, shifts in power, the column, and Modi. In the case of Persepolis, the action was a historiographical convention, shift in power, and creator that are all different from Sanjan. The durability of a column would have been all the more prescient for Modi and Nariman as they belonged to the first generations who had rediscovered ancient Iran, in part through archaeology.

11.5 Authorial authority and a contemporary audience

Empiricism was also central to how an author of this time established their authority to narrate the past. By the late nineteenth century a person, in any field, established their authority by using the language of science.[598] In order for an author to establish their authority and the believability of their historical narrative they needed to invoke scientific conventions. Empiricism was not only methodological but also rhetorical. The historical conventions of the time demanded all claims be based upon explicit evidence that could be corroborated.

598 For a study of how a scientific discourse was used, see Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

We can see how empiricism and the conventions of book history establish the historical authority of *The Early History*. Every claim is underpinned with footnotes to both primary and secondary sources that detail the counter arguments. For the print-history-human the very act of being a printed book from a publishing house established authority. With print culture there are conventions to establish the author's credentials to write about the subject in question such as quotations on the sleeve by authorities on the subject and a preface written by a notable person. There is a title, index and contents pages, each page is numbered for reference and footnotes establish the fact of the material. We can see these conventions in *The Early History* that begins with a foreword establishing how the work came to be written. The foreword details the involvement of "Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi" and Paymaster as the then editor of the *Parsi Prakash*, the community chronicle. The foreword then states that the history has been read and authenticated by three Parsi priests in addition to its conception by another in 1912.

In part, for the three revisions studied so far, how they each establish authority is tied to the different temporal locations of the intended audience relative to the author. As I argued in chapter five in the case of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, it is the revision to manuscript and the medium's relative durability that creates an audience in the future. Because the poem was written for future generations of priests it authenticated the account by drawing upon a tradition that future priests would value, the priestly tradition for the transmission of Zoroastrian knowledge. *The Parsees* was written primarily for a contemporary English audience and also for general Parsis. There was no longer a heritage impulse to save the past for the future because the durability and accessibility of print means that was knowledge of the past was no longer so precarious. As a result the past became the servant of a contemporary audience in a way not possible for the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. Karaka revised a priestly story but the fact that it came from a priest did not give Karaka authority to narrate the past. He established his authority for his British and English educated Parsi audience by using conventions of European historical scholarship. Similarly, *The Early History* was also written for a contemporary audience due to the accessibility and durability of print, but they were general Parsis, neither specifically laypeople nor priests. Paymaster claims authority through the review by priests and the revision of a priestly story, which would have been enough to authenticate the history for some Parsis but clearly not for all. In order to produce an authoritative historical account for a contemporary Parsi audience claims needed to be corroborated using footnotes.

11.6 Comparing the historical sensibilities of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, *The Parsees*, and *The Early History*

Before embarking upon an analysis of a contemporary historical sensibility, it is helpful to take a step back and briefly examine the forms of historical consciousness studied so far. *The Early History* is a classic work of modern history because it uses a method of independent inquiry to know the past. History because a debate over what happened because print augmented memory to such an extent that the past no longer needed to be actively remembered. What was known is then represented for a contemporary audience. Each revision expresses a different temporal relationship that can be summarised as:

> The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a representation of the present in the past for the future.
>
> *The Parsees* is a representation of the past from 1599 in the past for the present.
>
> *The Early History* is a representation of the past in the past for the present.

In the following chapters I argue that the historical sensibility expressed in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is restored with *Parsi Zoroastrians*.

12. *Parsi Zoroastrians* and postcolonial loss

Following Indian independence in 1947 many Parsis found that they had supported the wrong side. Some had supported Britain, others home-rule within the empire, and fewer still independence. Existing Parsi histories such as *The Parsees* and *The Early History* could not explain the end of British rule. The resultant shift in power between Parsis, Hindus, and the British, produced a series of postcolonial histories that revise the Parsi story and their encounter with Hindus in order to create an alliance with India. However, these histories were produced for a postcolonial moment, which has now turned into a global one. The shifts in power with the end of colonialism are now being superseded by globalisation. The Parsis' Indian corporations are turning into global corporations, Parsis are emigrating from India, and, pointedly, they have virtually stopped having children. Contemporary Parsi revisions must make historical sense of these complex shifts.

The fourth and final revision studied in this thesis was produced by a Parsi organisation called Parzor, which revises postcolonial histories in response to globalisation and demographic decline. Parzor, or PARsi ZORoastrian, was created in 1998 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, together with a Parsi named Shernaz Cama, an English literature academic in Delhi who continues to lead the project. As well as a response to globalisation, Parzor seeks to understand and reverse the community's demographic decline. In 2011 their population was 57,264[599] down from a high point of 114,890 in 1941.[600] Parzor runs a number of projects, from interviews with elderly Parsis, which record their oral cultural heritage, through to fertility programs. As their website states, one of the strategies Parzor uses to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Parsis and Zoroastrianism is to "look at popular narratives found in Modern Indian History."[601]

The website that is the final revision studied here was created in 2013 by Parzor. The site was created using tools from the Google Cultural Institute and is titled *1600BCE to 1600CE Parsi Zoroastrians: From Persia to Akbar's Court* with a subtitle of *Weaving a story of Culture, Continuity and Change*.[602] It revises contemporary oral historical stories, the earlier

599 Rivetna, "The Zarathushti World, a 2012 Demographic Picture"; Shroff and Castro, "The Potential Impact of Intermarriage on the Population Decline of the Parsis of Mumbai, India"; From the 2011 census Sunavala, "Alarming 18% Decline in Parsi Population since 2001 Census Has Community Worried - Times of India."

600 Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, 35.

601 Shernaz Cama, "UNESCO ASSISTED PARSI ZOROASTRIAN PROJECT," accessed August 6, 2014, http://www.unescoparzor.com/.

602 Cama and Singh, "Parsi Zoroastrians."

print histories studied, and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan.* The site tells a history of the Parsis beginning with an outline of Zoroastrianism followed by accounts of the Persian empires and their achievements to the defeat and persecution that precipitated the Parsis' exodus to India. Their arrival is narrated by retelling the most popular contemporary revision of the Parsi-Hindu encounter story, known as the Sugar in the Milk, using an embedded painting, text, and video.[603] The textual component reads:

> The famous 'Sugar in the Milk' story has acquired legendary overtones and has been passed on as part of oral tradition from one generation to another. Gujarati songs recounting this episode are still sung by Parsi women in Gujarat during Navjotes and weddings. A poetic reconstruction of the event is found in 'Kisseh-i-Sanjan', written in the 16th Century by Bahman Kaikobad.
>
> According to the legend, the Zoroastrians entered Sanjan exhausted and hungry and were taken to the King, Jadi Rana. Their spokesperson was a priest holding an Afargan with the sacred fire. He requested the king for shelter and permission to follow their own religious practices.
>
> In answer, the king stated that his kingdom was full. The priest then asked for a bowl of milk to which he mixed a little sugar suggesting that, just as the sugar merged with the milk and enhanced its flavour, the Zoroastrians would sweeten the life of the new kingdom and blend into it without disturbing it in any way.
>
> Impressed by the priest's wisdom, the king allowed the refugees to stay in his kingdom on certain conditions such as requiring them to learn the local language, requiring the women to wear the local dress — the saree, laying down their arms and holding weddings only after dark.[604]

603 This version is retold by Parsis in conversations, songs, novels, plays, films, paintings, newspaper articles, print histories, and online. *Parsi Zoroastrians* combines the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* with the Sugar in the Milk and colonial era print histories into a narrative made up of text, images, video, and audio.

604 Cama and Singh, "Parsi Zoroastrians."

After telling the Sugar in the Milk story the site continues with their story in India and fusion of Iranian and Indian practices before finishing with an account of the interaction of the Zoroastrian priest named Meherji Rana at the court of the Mughal Indian Emperor Akbar that also featured in the fourth and fifth chapter of this thesis.

The next five chapters seek to understand how *Parsi Zoroastrians* came to be, the historical consciousness it expresses and how this relates to the earlier revisions. Similar to the earlier revisions studied, I posit that we can understand the action that produced Parzor's revision using a theory of historiographical agency. The augmented historian that produced this revision is web-history-cama*,* which is a form of web-history-human. This augmented agent is created in the space between shifts in power with decolonisation, globalisation, and demographic decline; shifts in historiographical conventions with the acceptability of didactic and oral history; and the shift in medium to the web.

By comparing the four revisions I argue that the historical consciousness expressed in *Parsi Zoroastrians* is a restoration of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's*; or put another way, the historical thinking of web-history-cama is strikingly similar to script-history-bahman. This is because they both express a temporal relationship in which the present is represented in the past for a future audience. Yet, as I will show, they do this for very different reasons. Pointedly, this restored historical sensibility is markedly different from the print-history-human revisions of *The Parsees* or *The Early History*.

In order to understand how Parzor's revision negotiates globalisation we must first examine the earlier postcolonial nationalist responses that it revises. This chapter seeks to understand how Parsis produced historical revisions in postcolonial India of a treaty trading asylum for loyalty in order to align the community with Hindus. I argue that colonial era historical accounts could not explain the Parsis place in independent India. *The Parsees'* anglophilic history of loyalty to the British did not offer an understanding of their place in independent Hindu India. Histories that tied them to Iran could not negotiate their relationship with Hindus; and *The Early History*, which located the community between the British and Hindus, was too ambivalent. In the wake of decolonisation the question that provoked their historical revisions was how to be loyal when their loyalty had shifted; how to tell a story of loyalty to Hindu India when their ancestors were loyal to the British. With the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* Parsis had a template because decolonisation restored Hindus to political sovereignty as it existed at the time of the Parsis' arrival in India. This offered the possibility of restoring the Parsi-Hindu alliance. Postcolonial histories revised

the story to add a new ending in which the treaty is fulfilled by Parsis from the independence movement, industrialists, and the military.

This chapter is organised around a three part argument. I begin with the British departure and the sense of loss and decline many Parsis felt in its wake, which necessitated a variety of historical responses from avowedly Indian nationalist histories and biographies of the community's contributors to more insular ethnohistories. Indian nationalist revisions understood their encounter story as an expression of the Parsis' loyalty to Hindus and the community's nationalists as the vanguard of the independence movement. Their loyalty to the British was forgotten and loyalty to India remembered. The second part examines the rise of Hindu nationalism and a discourse in which the Parsis have become a symbol of a loyal minority community in contrast to the disloyalty of Muslims. The third part claims that there exists a form of class solidarity between elite Hindus and Parsis, which produces a story of loyalty that protects Parsis from being targeted due to their wealth and difference.

Before beginning, it is important to clarify that I am not arguing that the Parsi story of loyalty is unfounded or historically inaccurate; the situation is more complex than that. I am not seeking to undermine the sense of Parsi patriotism. During fieldwork Parsis constantly expressed an abiding but critical affection for India. The contribution of individual Parsis to the creation of modern India and more broadly to globalisation is beyond dispute. However, whether the metaphor of a sweetening is accurate depends upon the person in question. For instance, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy contributed philanthropically to the development of Mumbai but his wealth came in large part from trade in opium. Opium was a contributing factor to the Anglo-Sino wars, and eventually the end of the Qing dynasty in China. Another example is the Tatas, who have contributed philanthropically to India, and have been instrumental in building India's industrial infrastructure and its Information Communication Technology sector. Yet their first steel factory was built on the land of tribal people who were dispossessed. When there is a dispute with a Parsi company or organisation, there is often a Parsi on the other side. This can be seen in the large scale labour disputes at the Tata steel plant in the 1920s and 1930s in which the leader of the union was also a Parsi.[605] It is the same with colonialism. Individual Parsis along with other elite communities were central to British conquest but they were also instrumental in its challenge.[606] For me the question is, how is

605 Mani P. Kamerkar, "Social Crusaders," in *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005), 312–14.

606 More broadly there is the problem of transposing the actions of individual Parsis onto the community as a whole or even the sense that this is a community.

history revised to make sense of and express these shifting and often highly complex relationships.

12.1 The end of colonial rule and a sense of loss

Postcolonial Parsi histories seek to make sense of the 1947 British departure from South Asia, which resulted from a sustained movement for independence. But independence was bitter-sweet for many because South Asia was partitioned into Hindu majority India and Muslim majority Pakistan. The regions that would become part of India and Pakistan were broadly determined by the religion professed by the majority of their inhabitants.[607] Nonetheless, the regions that would become part of India had a vast number of Muslims and the regions for Pakistan contained many non-Muslims including some Parsis. The ensuing violence between Hindus and Muslims resulted in an estimated one million deaths and the largest recorded mass movement in history, with 12.5 million people moving to be with their coreligionists.[608] Both India and Pakistan were scarred by Partition.

The postcolonial Indian state had a decidedly Hindu bent even though the secular Indian National Congress was elected. Parliament was dominated by Hindus as they made up the vast majority of the population and the electorate. Congress leader Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister, a post he would hold for the next 17 years; and Congress would hold power until 1977. Yet the existence of Muslim Pakistan called into question the place of Muslims and other minorities in India. Hindu nationalists and some within the Congress expressed the view that if Pakistan was nation for Muslims it made sense for Muslims living in India to migrate there.[609]

In a sense Parsis found themselves in a political relationship with Hindus that was similar to the point in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* following their acceptance into India. In both the precolonial story and the postcolonial reality Parsis were negotiating with a Hindu polity. With independence, the dominant community with whom Parsis had to negotiate returned to the community whom they first met on arrival in India. When they arrived they met with a Hindu king, and in democratic India they were negotiating with an elite and a majority that were Hindu.

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607 Although this was not the case for Kashmir which held a particular place for India's first Prime Minister Nehru as he is Kashmiri.

608 Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 221–22.

609 For a discussion of this problem see Gyanendra Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 4 (1999): 608–29; Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

Nevertheless, for many Parsis the end of colonial rule produced a sense of loss and decline. There was and still is a nostalgia for the colonial past. Tanya Luhrmann captured their predicament and this sense of loss in her book *The Good Parsi: The Fate of a Colonial Elite in a Postcolonial Society*.[610] Luhrmann argues that in postcolonial India Parsis found themselves out of place as they had anglicised but then the English departed. This fate is similar to other colonial era elites such as the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Indos of Indonesia, the Krios of Sierra Leone, the Jews of Tunisia, and Indians in eastern and southern Africa. These communities were the compradors of the colonial world, sitting between the colonisers and the colonised. They accepted and were part of a European liberal mission to civilise the world but found themselves on the wrong side of history. They sided with the colonial power and colonialism ended. They became wealthy and powerful, they became brown or black Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Dutchmen but then the colonial world came to an end. Parsis are not the only community in India who have suffered this fate. The Jews of Mumbai became wealthy during colonial rule and in postcolonial India they have departed for Israel. The Bengali Bhadralok and Anglo-Indians embraced the English dream and then the English were ejected. Yet it was often these colonial elites that were instrumental in their country's independence movements. They believed in the colonial dream and found the dream unfulfilled because the Enlightenment promise of universal equality appeared as a mirage for subjugation. They rebelled and drove out the colonisers under whom they became wealthy but their cultural alignment with Europeans left a sense that they were foreigners in India. For the Parsis, they were more English than Indian yet found themselves living in India. Their ancestors' adaptation of European culture left them out of place in the postcolonial world. Parsis feel this loss of power to this day, which manifests a historical sense that their time has past and many exude this loss.[611]

Luhrmann argues that the Parsis' sense of decline is psychological. Many of India's largest business conglomerates are still controlled by the Parsis, and they predominately live in one of the most elite parts of India, southern Mumbai. They excel in all indicators except fertility. The issue is that there was once a large gap in wealth and power gap between them and other communities, which has decreased. Whereas once they were the

610 Luhrmann, *The Good Parsi: The Fate of a Colonial Elite in a Postcolonial Society*.

611 This is captured in the Parsi Rohinton Mistry's novels. See Rohinton Mistry, *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (London: Faber, 1992); Rohinton Mistry, *Such a Long Journey*, 1st U.S. ed. (New York: Knopf ;Distributed by Random House, 1991); Rohinton Mistry, *Family Matters*, 1st U.S. ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2002); Rohinton Mistry, *A Fine Balance : A Novel*, 1st U.S. ed. (New York: Knopf ;Distributed by Random House, 1996); For a Hindu version of loss see Kiran Desai, *The Inheritence of Loss* (London: Hamilton [u.a., 2002).

vanguard of Indian modernity and capitalism cohabiting with the British in elite institutions, in postcolonial India they have been joined by many Hindus.

Yet there are also Parsis in Gujarat who do not feel a sense of colonial loss because they maintained their syncretic Parsi-Hindu practices and engaged with the British in a similar manner to Hindu and Muslim Gujaratis. Here Parsis participate in Hindu festivals such as Ganpati, which Muslims do not, and their homes exude a Zoroastrian-Hindu syncretism. The photo in illustration nine shows the upper corner of a room in a Parsi house in Navsari, which is common in a Gujarati Hindu home where idols and photos of ancestors are displayed. In this Parsi version, a fire is central because it is the symbol of Zoroastrianism. There are pictures of their prophet Zarathustra together with pictures of family ancestors, the Hindu saint Saibaba, and the Catholic Mother Teresa.

Illustration 9: Jesse Buck, *Corner temple in Navsari house*, photo, May 2013, Navsari, Gujarat.

There are Parsis who react to the community's nostalgia for the colonial past by abandoning the community and marrying a non-Parsi to such a degree that as of 2010, 38% of Parsis had married outside the community.[612] Many who marry out continue to practice their religion, but a significant proportion are lost to the community. They want to

612 Bachi Karkaria Biswas Soutik, "Why Is India's Wealthy Parsi Community Vanishing?," *BBC News*, January 9, 2016, sec. India, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-35219331.

be fully Indian rather than part Persian. The children of those Parsis who marry outside the community often have an ambivalent relationship to Zoroastrianism. This is most glaringly the case for Parsi women who marry out because their children are not accepted as Zoroastrian. The issue of mixed marriages is a key point of fracture within the community.[613] In many respects this tension is at the core of the community because Parsis and their history simultaneously seek to mix with Hindus, which in part is to marry a Hindu, yet also to remain a distinct Zoroastrian community, which is to marry amongst themselves. In this sense, both factions are fully Parsi.

A sense of loss is not new to the Parsis as it is part of their story from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* until today. As I have argued in previous chapters, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* historical sensibility of cycles of creation, mixture, and resolution was transformed in the colonial era to one linear movement beginning with a golden age, followed by a fall, and ending with resurrection. I would suggest that in different eras Parsis locate themselves at a different point in the colonial era narrative structure. For instance, *The Parsees* they were in the process of resurrection, and in Paymaster's *Early History* their resurrection is complete and Parsis were celebratory. However, in postcolonial India Parsis find themselves in the stage of loss. The triumphant tone of the earlier historical accounts now seemed discordant with the community's sense of despair. The shift from recovery to loss and back to recovery provokes historical revisions. It is because Parsis understand themselves within this narrative structure that the shift from one stage to the next provokes not only a change in their sense of collective self but also necessitates revisions of their origin story.

12.2 Revising the past to account for a sense of loss

Broadly, in the postcolonial period the historiographical response has been a series of nationalist revisions that deny this loss and instead imagine Parsis as the vanguard of the independence movement.[614] These histories react to the anglophilia of the community and loss of Indianness with a public profession of loyalty to India.[615] While there were key Parsis involved in the movement, they were in fact a tiny minority of the community. At the time they were marginalised; in posterity they have been lionised and afforded a central role. For these nationalist Parsi historians there is a sense that it is their historical experience that binds them to India. The link between Indian nationalism and

613 Meher Pestonji, *Mixed Marriage and Other Stories* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1999).

614 Nanavutty, *The Parsis*; Mody, *Pherozeshah Mehta*; Mody, *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*; Mody, *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*; Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*; S. R. Wadia, *Dadabhai Naoroji: A Model for Indian Youth Today* (Bombay: N.L. Shah, 1984).

615 These belong to a genre of history writing supported by the postcolonial Indian government. See Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography*, 238.

contemporary revisions of the story is illustrated by a Adi Doctor in a 2002 book chapter titled "Parsis and the Spirit of Indian Nationalism". He writes:

> The political attitudes of the Parsis have been considerably shaped by their early history in India. In the first place Parsi historians are very conscious of the common Aryan heritage that they share with their Hindu brethren.[616]

This illustrates the importance of an understanding of common origins that appeared in the late nineteenth century that I discussed in chapter ten. Doctor continues:

> Secondly, in keeping with the promise made by their ancestors to King Jadi Rana in 936 CE, at the time of being provided shelter, the Parsis, ever since, have endeavoured "to sweeten the country by their good deeds"; while retaining their distinct identity. They have become one with the country and its people.[617]

Broadly the nationalist revisions fall into two types, corresponding to attempts to negotiate alliances with the two main streams of nationalist thought in India. These revisions are produced by both Parsis and Hindus. The first is a response to the secular nationalism of the Congress, which describes the Parsis' contribution to the founding of the Congress, the independence movement, and the fraternal affection between key Hindu leaders and Parsis. The second is Hindu nationalism, which asserts the essential Hinduness of the Indian nation. I will begin with the former.

An exemplary Congress-style revision titled *The Parsis* was published by Piloo Nanavutty in 1977 and updated in 1980.[618] In part *The Parsis* is a restoration of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* political vision of a Parsi-Hindu alliance. Nanavutty's account differs from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* insofar as it is not an alliance against Muslims but one for Indian independence and the development of modern India. In the preface the author explains:

> If the reader is made more aware of the role Parsis could play in building a new, strong and self-reliant India, the book will have served its purpose.[619]

The Parsis is one of the most popular contemporary Parsi histories and was frequently cited in interviews with Cama, the director of the Parzor project. Nanavutty serves on the

616 Adi H. Doctor, "Parsis and the Spirit of Indian Nationalism," in *A Zoroastrian Tapestry*, ed. P. J. Godrej and F. P. Mistree (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2002), 493.
617 Doctor, 493.
618 Nanavutty, *The Parsis*.
619 Nanavutty, v.

Parzor board, and in many respects Parzor's historical account is the next revision. Notably, Nanavutty's account was published by the Indian government, and is also a revision of the three texts studied so far. The preface begins with:

> Since D.F. Karaka's History of the Parsees, (2 Vols. London, 1884), there has been no comparable study on the subject. The works of S. H. Hodivala, R. B. Paymaster and others on the early history of the Parsis in India are, unfortunately, out of print.[620]

Nanavutty uses a narrative structure that has become standard for books produced by the Parsis about themselves. As we have seen, they have three parts. The first contains an outline of their religion of Zoroastrianism. The second is a chronological historical account of their origin story. The third is a collected biography of Parsis who are famous for their loyalty or their contribution to India. This structure first appeared in Paymaster's *Early History of the Parsees in India* and has been the subject of numerous works.[621] Nanavutty's history begins with the origins of the Aryans and the dynasties of Iranian epics through to the foundations of Zoroastrianism and their customs. The early history of the community in India is recounted along with a version of the Sugar in the Milk. This is followed by a series of biographical accounts of Parsis who have contributed and been loyal to India. Nanavutty celebrates individual Parsis who she writes played "a leading role in the struggle for national independence" and their relationship to Hindu leaders.[622] The Parsis' ambivalence to the independence movement is explained writing:

> During the struggle for Independence, the majority of Parsis with a few exceptions, kept aloof from the political scene. When however Independence seemed imminent, the Parsis boldly proclaimed their adherence and loyalty to the new government.[623]

With Nanavutty's exemplary postcolonial history we can see how Parsis revised history to explain Indian independence and negotiate a place for Parsis in new India.

620 Nanavutty, v.
621 Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*.
622 Nanavutty celebrates Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, and Dinshaw Wacha. She details the relationship between Mahatma Gandhi and Feroze Gandhi who would go on to marry Nehru's daughter Indira. India would become the third Prime Minister of India. See Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, 63, 78.
623 Nanavutty, 166.

12.3 Remembering Parsi patriots of the Indian independence struggle

Biography is central to Parsi historical consciousness in the postcolonial period because the individual stories of nationalists in the community are used to illustrate the fulfilment of the larger Parsi story of a pact for asylum. Biographies and biographical snippets of notable Parsis are often understood as the repayment of the entire community's debt to Hindus. Individual Parsis come to signify the larger narrative of every Parsis' contribution and loyalty to independent India. These biographies often verge on the hagiographic with the community and their notables frequently described with superlatives. Parsi patriots appear in individual and collected biographies, as sections in Parsi and Indian histories, in plays, street names, buildings, coins, and statues remembered by both Parsis and non-Parsis.[624] I am not suggesting that these individuals are not patriots, or that the publicising of their loyalty is unfounded. Rather, I am interested in the process by which they have come to symbolise Parsi loyalty, contribution, and the fulfilment of their ancestor's treaty with Hindus. In part the broadcasting of their names seeks to counteract the emergence of any narrative of Parsi disloyalty based upon their previous alliance with the British, or that they are a wealthy minority. Pointedly, this is different from how biographical accounts are used in the colonial period, and substantially different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in which biography does not feature.

What individual Parsis signifies changes between colonial era biographies and the postcolonial. Parsi and British produced biographies in the nineteenth and early twentieth

624 For instance India's first Field Marshall Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw see Jessica Gupta et al., *In War & Peace: The Life of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, MC* (New Delhi: UNESCO Parzor, 2007); Eustace D'Souza, "Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw: A Soldiers' Soldier," in *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005); Or the Parsi founder of the Indian nuclear program Homi Bhabha. See G Venkataraman, *Bhabha and His Magnificent Obsessions* (Hyderabad: Universities Press, 1994); Jamsheed G. Kanga, "Building Nuclear India," in *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005); Raj Chengappa, *Weapons of Peace: The Secret Story of India's Quest to Be a Nuclear Power* (New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers, India, 2000); Hormazdyar Shahpursha Dalal, *Prophet of the Atomic Age* (Bombay: The Trustees of the Parsi Panchayet, 1994); C. V Sundaram, L. V Krishnan, and T. S Iyengar, *Atomic Energy in India-50 Years* (Mumbai: Dept. of Atonomic Energy, 1998); Abana E Mistri, *The Parsis and Indian Classical Music: An Unsung Contribution* (Mumbai: Swar Sadhna Samiti, 2004); M. E Pavri, *Parsi Cricket* (Mumbai: K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, 2006); Hormusji Darukhanawala, *Parsis and Sports and Kindred Subjects* (Bombay: n.p., 1935); B. K Karanjia, *Rustom Masani; Portrait of a Citizen* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1970); B. K Karanjia and Jenny Bhatt, *Vijitatma: Founder-Pioneer Ardeshir Godrej* (New Delhi; New York, NY: Viking, 2004); B. K Karanjia, *Give Me a Bombay Merchant Anytime!: The Life of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Bt., 1783-1859* (Mumbai: University of Mumbai, 1998); Hormazdyar Shahpursha Dalal, *Veer Nariman: A Profile* (Bombay: Trustees of the Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties, 1992); Also the collected biographies of Mody, *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*; Hormazdyar Shapurshah Dalal, *The Parsis, 1947 to 2001: Highlights of Achievements after Independence* (Bombay: Hormazdyar Shapurshah Dalal, 2004); Dadabhoy, *Sugar in Milk: Lives of Eminent Parsis*; Godrej N Dotivala, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Memorial Volume* (Bombay: Mayor's Fund Committee, 1990).

century use accounts of individual Parsis to signify the entire community's contribution to colonial life. As the independence movement gathered pace, Parsis involved in commerce and social reform were reimagined as protonationalists, signifying the community's contribution to India. These later biographies became a template for postcolonial histories in which Parsis are celebrated for creating trade unions and fighting for social reform through to their contribution to the military, professions in law, journalism, music, the arts, literature, science, and education. Amongst these individuals the community's loyalty and the fulfilment of the pact for asylum has come to by symbolised by three key Parsis.

Firstly, the foremost symbol of their loyalty and political contribution is Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917), one of the founders of the Indian National Congress who featured in chapter eight and nine. How Naoroji is represented in postcolonial India draws upon late colonial era nationalist biographies.[625] He signifies the Parsis' alliance with the Congress and Gandhi for both Parsis and non-Parsis. For instance, a biography was commissioned to commemorate the 1985 centenary founding of the Congress.[626] The author of another biography that formed part of the "Indian Freedom Fighters Series" wrote on the sleeve:

> Dadabhai Naoroji, commonly known as the Grand Old Man, was the most respected leader of our freedom struggle.[627]

Nanavutty describes him as "an Indian patriot"[628] whose 1906 presidential address to the Congress "demanded Swaraj, full independence, for India."[629] In 2003 the Indian mint issued a five rupee Naoroji commemorative coin as a result of lobbying from Parzor. Cama stated in an interview that part of her motivation for the coin was that many people did not know that Naoroji was a Parsi. His is the first entry in a recent lavishly produced multi-volume collected biography titled *Enduring legacy, Parsis of the 20th century*, edited by a Parsi named Nawaz Mody, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the University of Mumbai.[630] In an interview Mody said it was published for a non-Parsi audience.[631]

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625 For instance, see Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*; Natesan, *Famous Parsis: Biographical & Critical Sketches of Patriots, Philanthropists, Politicians, Reformers, Scholars, and Captains of Industry*.

626 Singh, *Dadabhai Naoroji, 1825-1917 the Grand Old Man of India*.

627 Shiri R Bakshi, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1991).

628 Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, 66–67.

629 Nanavutty, 68.

630 Mody, *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*.

631 Alongside Naoroji there are other Parsis from the independence struggle who are celebrated such as Wadia, *Dadabhai Naoroji*; Pherozeshah Mehta from the early Congress is celebrated in Nanavutty and numerous other biographies. See Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, 69; Mody, *Pherozeshah Mehta*; Bhattacharjee, *The Prophets of Modern Indian Nationalism*; Dotivala, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Memorial Volume*; V. S Srinivasa Sastri, *Life and Times of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1975); M. H Syed, Imran Ahmed, and N. P Sharma, *Pherozeshah Mehta* (Mumbai: Himalaya Books : Sole distributers, Himalaya Pub.

Secondly, the Tata family symbolises the Parsis' economic nationalism and contribution to industrial development. The conglomerate originated in Navsari in 1868 with the family's scion Jamsetji Tata (1839-1904). Today the Tata Group is one of the largest conglomerates in India with a market capitalisation of US$116 billion employing over 660,000 people.[632] They are and have been involved in industries ranging from steel, automotive, and aviation to textiles, power, telecommunication, and IT services. Tata trusts provide some funding for Parzor and have been instrumental in the creation of key scientific and social research institutions in India. The Tatas have employed their own hagiographer who has written extensively in praise of the dynasty.[633] The entry on Jamsteji Tata in Mody's collected biography links him to the independence struggle and the Congress:

> Jamsetji was a nationalist long before this word had any real significance. He was present, for instance, at the founding of the Indian National Congress in Bombay in 1885, and gave generously to its funds.[634]

How the Tata family promote themselves as nationalists can be seen in a book commemorating the centenary of their steel business. The group's then chairperson, Ratan Tata, wrote in the first line of the forward:

> The period through which Jamsetji Tata lived was infused with patriotic fervour and the creation of Tata Steel was perhaps the most stellar example of his nationalistic entrepreneurship.[635]

House, 2010); *Dinshaw Edulji Wacha*; Govind Talwalkar, "Sir Dinshaw Edulji Wacha: Gentleman Politician," in *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005).

632 "Tata Group Profile via @tatacompanies," accessed August 6, 2016, http://www.tata.com/aboutus/sub_index/Leadership-with-trust.

633 R. M Lala, *For the Love of India: The Life and Times of Jamsetji Tata* (New Delhi: Viking, 2004); R. M Lala, *Beyond the Last Blue Mountain: A Life of J.R.D. Tata* (New Delhi: Viking, 1992); R. M Lala, *The Joy of Achievement: Conversations with J.R.D. Tata* (New Delhi: Viking, 1995); R. M Lala, *The Creation of Wealth: A Tata Story* (Bombay: IBH, 1981); R. M. Lala, "Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata: The Man and His Vision," in *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005); R. M. Lala, "Global Achiever," in *Enduring Legacy, Parsis of the 20th Century*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005); R. M Lala, *A Touch of Greatness: Encounters with the Eminent* (New Delhi; New York, NY: Viking, 2001); R. M Lala, *The Romance of Tata Steel* (New Delhi; New York, NY: Penguin, Viking, 2007); R. M Lala and Mario de Miranda, *The Heartbeat of a Trust: A Story of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust* (New Delhi: Tata Mcgraw-Hill Pub. Co., 1998).

634 Lala, "Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata: The Man and His Vision," 188.

635 Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *A Century of Trust: The Story of Tata Steel* (New Delhi; New York, NY: Penguin, Portfolio, 2008), vii.

Another Parsi biographer called him "the Father of Industrial India."[636] In a book titled *The Sugar in the Milk: The Parsis in India*, the Parsi author links the scion to the pact for asylum writing:

> Jamsetjee Tata, single-handed, repaid to India, many times over, the debt which the Parsis owed to this fabulous country a thousand years earlier when their forefathers were given shelter and refuge on the shores of Western India.[637]

The final symbol of Parsi loyalty I will discuss here is Bhikaiji Rustom Cama (1861-1936), affectionately known as Madame Cama.[638] She died in obscurity but is remembered in postcolonial India as a female champion of the independence movement.[639] One Parsi wrote that Cama was "the High Priestess of Indian Nationalism".[640] The Parzor project has a page on their website dedicated to her story, and along with other accounts, the page repeats the oft made Parsi claim that she was the first to unveil the Indian flag[641]:

> Madame Cama's greatest hour was at the Stuttgart Conference[642] in August 1907...She spoke with bitterness and India spoke through her. At the end of the speech she proudly unfurled the tricolour, which she had kept concealed, and to the thunderous cheers of the delegates demanded justice for India...The tricolour unfurled by Madame Cama is with some modification the flag of India today.[643]

These three Parsis and the genre of biography are central to postcolonial Parsi histories, which Parzor builds upon. The addition of biography is part of a revision of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* account in which individual Parsis are used to symbolise the fulfilment of the Parsis' pact for asylum through their loyalty and contribution to India.

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636 B. K. Boman-Behram, "Social Relationship between the Parsis and Other Communities," in *The Sugar in the Milk: The Parsis in India*, ed. Ram Singh and Nancy Singh (Delhi: I.S.P.C.K., 1986), 64.

637 Nani A. Palkhivala, "The Role of Parsis in India," in *The Sugar in the Milk: The Parsis in India*, ed. Ram Singh and Nancy Singh (Delhi: I.S.P.C.K., 1986), 127.

638 Shernaz Cama is distantly related to Madame Cama by marriage.

639 For example see Bishamber Dayal Yadav, *Madam Cama: A True Nationalist* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1992); Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, 66–67; Mody, *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*; Shirin Darasha, *Madame Cama* (Mumbai: A.R. Gale for Navneet Publications (India) Ltd., 1997); S Gajrani and S. R Bakshi, *Madam Bhikhaji Cama: Role in Freedom Movement* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 2012); Khorshed Adi Sethna, *Madame Bhikhaiji Rustom Cama* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1987).

640 Mody, *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*, 18.

641 For other examples see Mody, 18; Dadabhoy, *Sugar in Milk: Lives of Eminent Parsis*, 140.

642 The International Socialist Congress.

643 Shernaz Cama, "Madame Bhikaiji Cama," accessed August 4, 2016, http://unescoparzor.com/parsi-stories/madame-bhikaiji-cama/.

12.4 Hindu nationalism and the Parsis' place in Hindu India

Parsis also seek to negotiate a mutually beneficial alliance with Hindu nationalists who were, and continue to be, the political opponents of the Congress. From the 1920s India has witnessed the development of a movement that asserts the essential Hinduness of India.[644] This is a movement that imagines India as a Hindu nation, which is different from the more inclusive territorial nationalism of the Congress. Scholars have understood it as an ethnic-nationalist movement hostile towards non-Hindu communities and particularly Muslims.[645] Seemingly it poses a challenge for the Parsis who are not a Hindu community. Although Parzor is not aligned with this movement, contemporary Parsi histories need to be understood within the context of the shift in power with the rise of Hindu nationalism, which needs to be understood through historical revisions.

Although Hindu nationalists are hostile towards Muslims they often express a fraternal affection for Parsis and use the encounter story together with biographical accounts of Parsi patriots. For instance, the founder of Hindu nationalism Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966) wrote fondly of his Parsi friends such as Madame Cama.[646] On the Parzor site Cama is linked to Savarkar and early Hindu nationalist leaders.[647] Savarkar was part of the Congress in the 1910s and 1920s but was ejected due to his hostility towards Muslims and his avowedly pro-Hindu agenda. Savarkar wrote that the Parsis

> are by race, religion, language and culture most akin to us. They have greatfully been loyal to India and have made her their only

644 Hindu nationalism is also known as Hindutva.

645 Romila Thapar, "Secularism, History, and Contemporary Politics in India," in *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, ed. Anuradha Dingwaney Needham and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (Duke University Press, 2007), 191–207; Sumit Sarkar, "The Fascism of the Sangh Parivar," *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, no. 5 (January 30, 1993): 163–67; Asghar Ali Engineer, "Minorities and Elections: What Are the Options?," *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 13 (March 27, 2004): 1378–79; Sanjeev Kumar, "Constructing the Nation's Enemy: Hindutva, Popular Culture and the Muslim 'Other' in Bollywood Cinema," *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2013): 458–69; Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*; Sikata Banerjee, *Make Me a Man!: Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India* (SUNY Press, 2005); Sumanta Banerjee, "The 'Discreet Charm' of the BJP," *Economic and Political Weekly* 49, no. 24 (June 6, 2014): 10–13; Gwilym Beckerlegge, "Saffron and Seva: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Appropriation of Swami Vivekananda," in *Hinduism in Public and Private: Reform, Hindutva, Gender and Sampraday*, ed. Antony Copley (Oxford University Press, 2003), 31–65; Sathianathan Clarke, "Hindutva, Religious and Ethnocultural Minorities, and Indian-Christian Theology," *Harvard Theological Review* 95, no. 02 (2002): 197–226; Ashis Nandy, "Hinduism Versus Hindutva The Inevitability Of A Confrontation," *Times of India*, February 18, 1991; Ashis Nandy, "Gujarat, Gujarat Obituary of a Culture," *Journal of Future Studies* 7, no. 1 (August 2002): 101–8.

646 Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan* (Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1984), 13, 31, http://www.savarkar.org/content/pdfs/en/hindu-rashtra-darshan-en-v002.pdf; Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Letters from the Andamans*, n.d., 13, 19, 22, 28, http://www.savarkar.org/content/pdfs/en/letters_from_andamans.v001.pdf.

647 It is written "Shyamji Varma, Sarvarkar, Har Dayal, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Madame Cama were the leaders of the Indian Revolutionary Movement." Cama, "Madame Bhikaiji Cama."

> home. They have produced some of the best Indian patriots and revolutionists like Dada Bhai and Madam Cama. They will have to be and therefore, shall be incorporated into the common Indian State with perfectly equal rights and trust.[648]

Hindu nationalists revise the Parsi story in order to simultaneously illustrate India's plurality and the threat posed by Muslims. The story is part of a nationalist imagination in which the Hindu nation is munificent and plural for accepting Parsis and justified in its exclusion of Muslims. The Parsis are imagined as an exemplary minority in contrast and as a lesson to Muslims and Christians in how they should relate to the Hindu majority. Simply put, Muslims and Christians should be loyal and acculturate. For instance one of the key thinkers in the movement wrote of India:[649]

> here was already a full-fledged ancient nation of the Hindus and the various communities which were living in the country were here either as guests, the Jews and Parsis, or as invaders, the Muslim and Christians.[650]

Furthermore, he narrated a revision of the Parsi-Hindu encounter writing:

> We had always been hospitable. Anyone was welcome to stay here. But all of them were required to act up to our national codes and conventions. Several centuries ago, when barbaric hordes of Arabs and Turks invaded Persia, some Parsis left their motherland and sailed forth with their Holy Fire and Holy Book and landed at Surat. King Yadava Rana welcomed them with open arms and consulted the Shankarachrya of Dwaraka Math as to how to accept them. They were asked to give up beef-eating, respect mother-cow as an object of national faith and live here in peace. These followers of Zaratushtra have kept up their promise even to this day.[651]

I would suggest, however, that the comparison is problematic given the enormous demographic difference between Parsis and Muslims. Hindu nationalists can be munificent because Parsis do not constitute a demographic threat because their population is

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648 Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, 31.
649 This is Madhavrao Sadashivrao Golwalkar (1906-1973).
650 Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu Prakashana, 1966), 119, http://www.archivesofrss.org/Encyc/2014/1/20/23_07_20_06_thoughts.pdf.
651 Golwalkar, 114–15.

minuscule and declining.[652] For the tiny Parsis the story mitigates against the complete absorption and disappearance of the community by having a distinct identity.

The Parsis have been celebrated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governments of Narendra Modi who was formerly the Chief Minister of Gujarat and elected Prime Minister of India in 2014. The BJP is the political party of Hindu nationalism.[653] In 2011 Modi commissioned the construction of "World Heritage Centres for Religious Harmony" in the Gujarati villages of Udvada and Sanjan.[654] Pointedly, Udvada is the present day home of the Iranshah fire that is the subject of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. These centres celebrate Parsi heritage in Gujarat and India and at their opening Modi said:

> When the world's smallest minority gives a political leader a standing ovation, no greater stamp of approval is required.[655]

He went on to recite a version of the Parsi-Hindu encounter at a press conference announcing his successful inducement of Tata group's planned new car factory for Gujarat.[656]

In a state government sponsored play to celebrate Gujarat Day in 2013 the Sugar in the Milk and the Parsi story was used to educate the audience. In an interview the organiser of the play described the Parsis as:

> the world's best minority who show how a minority should behave.[657]

In one scene Naoroji appears with Madame Cama and in another scene the scion of the Tata dynasty discusses Hindu spiritualism and economic nationalism with one of the most

652 Jesse Buck, "'The World's Best Minority': Parsis and Hindutva's Ethnic Nationalism in India," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 15 (January 24, 2017): 1–17.

653 Jaffrelot, *Religion, Caste and Politics in India*; Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism a Reader*; Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Howard Spodek, "In the Hindutva Laboratory: Pogroms and Politics in Gujarat, 2002," *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 02 (2010): 349–99.

654 Udvada contains a temple that houses the oldest Zoroastrian fire in India which is called the Iranshah. According to the Parsi tradition Sanjan is where they first landed on arrival in India. "Udvada, Sanjan to Be World Heritage Centres for Religious Harmony: Narendra Modi | Latest News & Updates at Daily News & Analysis," *Dna*, April 24, 2011, http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-udvada-sanjan-to-be-world-heritage-centres-for-religious-harmony-narendra-modi-1535762.

655 Nergish Sunavala, "For Long a Congress Vote Bank, Parsis Willing to Give Narendra Modi a Thought," *Times of India*, April 1, 2014, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/For-long-a-Congress-vote-bank-Parsis-willing-to-give-Narendra-Modi-a-thought/articleshow/33753891.cms?

656 This was to manufacture the Nano, the world's cheapest car. See "Nano Welcome, Says Modi," *The Economic Times*, September 4, 2008, http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2008-09-04/news/27729338_1_nano-car-project-small-car-project-rs-one-lakh-car-project.

657 Gujarat Day is an annual state government sponsored commemoration of the founding of the state of Gujarat on the 1st of May. This interview refers to a 2013 play that featured the Parsi story in the town of Navsari.

esteemed historical figures of Hindu nationalists.[658] How Parsis are used as part of a discourse to exclude Muslims is illustrated by an email the playwright sent to me:

> I observed and cocluded that true nationalist minirity is parsee
> then muslims.they never demanded any seprate state or nation.[659]

Parsis produce historical revisions of their loyalty to India in order to counter the emergence of any hostility to the community. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the broader Parsi story offers a ready-made account of a Parsi-Hindu alliance against Muslims. For example, the Sugar in the Milk appears in a painting on the wall outside a Parsi trust run school in Navsari. A photo of the painting can be seen in illustration ten. When I interviewed the principal of the school and asked why it was commissioned he said that he wanted to inform the people of Navsari that

> this is the school of the Parsis and that Parsis are proud of India
> who has sheltered us

and even though the school had "Madresa" in its name, it was in fact a Parsi not a Muslim school.[660] Hindus are openly remembered for the magnanimity, but the motivation for the story's visual revision was Hindu-Muslim animosity.

Illustration 10: Jayraj Patel, *The Sugar in the Milk outside a Navsari school,* painting, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Nauserwanjee Zarthostri Madresa High School, Navsari, Gujarat. Photo taken by Jesse Buck 2 June 2013

The Sugar in the Milk story has become more relevant with the rise of Shiv Sena in Mumbai according to a former member of the Parsis' peak body, the Bombay Parsi

658 This is Swami Vivekananda.
659 From an email from Vishnu Pandya on 1/8/2013.
660 From an interview in Navsari in July 2013.

Panchayat (BPP).[661] Shiv Sena are an ethnonationalist movement that is hostile towards non-Hindus and non-Marathis. Marathis are the ethnic group that dominate the state of Maharashtra in which Mumbai is located. Shiva Sena are loosely aligned with Hindu nationalists and have committed numerous acts of violence against non-Hindu and non-Marathi communities. Nevertheless, the movement has not targeted the Parsis even though they are neither Hindus nor Marathis. However, their rise has prompted a more overt production of the Parsi story of loyalty and contribution.

For Parsis, history is often used as a political tool so that their tiny wealthy community is not targeted by these ethnonationalist movements. While in part the story of Parsi-Hindu loyalty is provoked by a fear of violence, it also offers a successful guide for its navigation. In 2011 the BPP asked a Parsi priest to produce a white paper on how they could best inform the new generation of non-Parsi leaders about the Parsis role in building Mumbai and modern India. It is a historical lesson of which the Sugar in the Milk is a part. According to the priest when the founder of Shiv Sena first arrived in Mumbai he lived with a Parsi family.[662] Many former ministers were close to Parsis and the founder of the movement's accountant was a Parsi. The problem as he saw it was that the new generation of non-Parsi leaders did not know the community's contribution to Mumbai.[663] History serves a very pragmatic educational purpose of inculcating in non-Parsi elites the role the community's forebears played in the creation of the city. These non-Parsi elites are an important insurance to mitigate against the flaring of future disputes. For new generations of Parsis, their historical story is a lesson in what is expected of them.

I would suggest the success of this strategy is illustrated by Shiv Sena's different response to perceived insults by individual Parsis and Muslims. The recurrent violence between Hindus and Muslims in India is rehearsed by sectarian groups who await a trigger. An incident occurs and their cadres are given a signal to riot by political leaders.[664] Parsis have been the target of rioting in the past and they assiduously avoid it by cultivating relationships with the leaders that ignite violence. For instance, the grandson of Shiv Sena's founder entered the political stage as a student at the University of Mumbai by seeking to remove a book from the curriculum that he deemed offensive to his

661 From an interview with Khojestee Mistree. For an overview of Shiv Sena see Jayant Lele, "Saffronisation of Shiv Sena: Political Economy of City, State and Nation," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, no. 25 (June 24, 1995): 1520–28.

662 Bal Thackery.

663 From an interview with Rooyintan Peer. Separately there is a video of him telling the Sugar in the Milk story here Jesse Buck, *Rooyintan Peer Telling the Parsi Story of the Sugar in the Milk* (Navsari, Gujarat, India, 2011), https://youtu.be/OjKmeA_jTgY.

664 Paul Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

grandfather. The book was written by a Parsi, yet his Parsiness was never an issue.[665] By contrast is the example of Facebook posts by two young Muslims following the death of Shiv Sena's founder, which resulted in the arrest of the young Muslims and general rioting against Muslims.[666] When an individual Parsi commits an infraction against a Hindu or Muslim he does not become a symbol for all Parsis. However, when a Muslim or a Hindu commits a similar offence against an other community they come to symbolise that entire community. I think the different responses are in large part due to the Parsi story, which cultivates particular group images of Parsis, Hindus, and Muslims.

12.5 Class solidarity between elite Hindus and Parsis

The Sugar in the Milk and the Parzor project also reflect a form of class solidarity amongst the Indian elite.[667] Class solidarity is produced by an affection that Parsis and Hindus form with each other in elite schools, institutions, and organisations. We can see this affection in the comments of the Hindu nationalist playwright of the aforementioned Gujarat Day play. In an interview he said the genesis of his affection for the community was his Parsi friends at school. In another instance at a Parsi party in Mumbai an elderly Parsi told me about his childhood school friend named Rajiv Gandhi who went on to lead the Congress and became the Prime Minister of India. In another interview the Parsi founder and director of a genetics company said that about one thousand families have enormous influence in India and there are many Parsi families amongst them. These families all know each other from schools and from clubs. For her company's Initial Public Offering she engaged a friend who is one of India's most famous dancers and choreographers to produce a play telling the Parsi story and the Sugar in the Milk. The play was performed in 16 towns and cities over India to bring in investors.[668]

The Parzor project was formed and continues to operate due to connections between Cama and members of the Indian elite. It was initiated by a Hindu Brahmin who was the then head of UNESCO India. He was friends and had worked with the late J. R.

665 Anupama Katakam and Lyla Bavadam, "Initiation Rites - Www.Frontline.in (HTTP)," Frontline, accessed August 11, 2016, http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl2723/stories/20101119272303300.htm.

666 Mumbai Bureau, "Mumbai Shuts down Due to Fear, Not Respect," *The Hindu*, n.d., http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/Mumbai-shuts-down-due-to-fear-not-respect/article15618967.ece; PTI, "Two Mumbai Girls Arrested for Facebook Post against Bal Thackeray Get Bail," India Today, accessed April 15, 2017, http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/2-mumbai-girls-in-jail-for-tweet-against-bal-thackeray/1/229846.html.

667 I recognise that this term is used in the context of working class solidarity. However, it appears to me that the solidarity amongst the bourgeoisie is far greater.

668 From an interview with Viloo Morawala-Patell and her company Avesthagen. The dancer and choreographer was Mallika Sarabhai. See Mallika Sarabhai, *And Then They Came to India* (Darpana Performing Group, 2011), https://youtu.be/Vrrg8tAP-p4.

D. Tata, a former head of the Tatas. Cama's father was a Lieutenant General in the Indian army and friends with India's first Field Marshall, the Parsi Sam Manekshaw, and the late Congress Prime Minster, Indira Gandhi. Parzor celebrated Manekshaw in a video interview and a book that opens with a message from the then BJP Prime Minister of India.[669] It is followed by a message from the Chief Minister of Delhi and the leader of the then opposition Congress.[670] The Minority Affairs Minister is on the board of Parzor. Their publications feature countless messages from members of the Indian elite praising the project.

Parsi wealth can produce an animosity towards the community but their philanthropy also produces an affection. They have funded key infrastructure projects in India, as well as hospitals and schools. For instance in Navsari, a town of 160,000 people, Parsi trusts run five schools and two hospitals. The Sugar in the Milk painting included earlier in this chapter was created by a man from a tribal community. His grandfather along with countless other tribal people in southern Gujarat were ejected from their land by Parsi liquor merchants and landlords. Yet the painter did not harbour any animosity towards Parsis. He had met the principal of the school who commissioned him to create the painting at a Parsi trust run gymnasium. The Parsi principal had given him a start in his artistic career, which led to a position as an art teacher at another Parsi trust run school.

I am not suggesting that philanthropy is a bribe, rather it is tied together with their story and the perception other communities have of the Parsis as loyal. During my fieldwork I met a number of tribal people and Muslims together with a smaller number of Hindus who expressed an animosity towards the community's wealth and anglophilia. Yet given the existence of many points of friction in India over religion, land, caste, and class, it is striking how little hostility there is and how rarely Parsis are targeted. By contrast, the hostility between Hindus and Muslims is palpable across India, as is the tension between tribal peoples and caste Hindus. In interviews I conducted during fieldwork, Parsis often stated that their philanthropy is due to religious injunctions. However, it appears to me that their philanthropy is in part a result of their story of persecution that produces a sense of debt to India that each generation of Parsis seeks to repay.

669 Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, 125; The then Prime Minister was the Bharatiya Janata Party leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1924-). See Gupta et al., *In War & Peace*, 3.

670 The Chief Minister is Sheila Dikshit. The then leader of the Congress was Sonia Gandhi. See Gupta et al., *In War & Peace*, 4–5.

In the next chapter I will show how the Parzor project builds upon these nationalist historical responses by adding a new layer that is a response to globalisation and demographic decline.

13. A heritage response to demographic decline and globalisation

In some respects the metaphor of the sugar in the milk has been fulfilled because Parsis have mixed and vanished into the milk. Their legacy is significant in the multiple waves of globalisation, Indian and Iranian modernisation, the British and Mughal empires, more than a millennia and a half ruling Iran and the surrounding areas, and a tradition that has shaped the beliefs of Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. A three millennia long continuous living Zoroastrian tradition that has survived the repeated rise and fall of empires and exile in India is now coming to an end of its own volition. The end began in 1941 when the Parsi population in India and that of Zoroastrians globally went into sharp decline. Zoroastrianism is coming to an end because Parsis have stopped having children.

In 1998 the director of UNESCO India contacted Shernaz Cama to initiate the Parzor project.[671] He was concerned about the community's demographic decline and wanted to publicise their achievements. Sharma was not alone in his concern nor the first to give it voice.[672] Since at least 1948 Parsis have been aware of their decline and have been progressively joined by scholars and recently the Indian government in trying to understand and reverse their decline.[673] Nevertheless, today their future and that of Zoroastrianism is bleak. In the decade from 2001 to 2011 the Parsi population declined a further 12.4%.[674] Their age distribution makes a recovery unlikely as the percentage of the population over 60 is 31% and in 2011 there were only 87 Parsi girls born in India.[675] Globally the Zoroastrian population has decreased from 124,953 in 2004 to 111,691 in 2012.[676]

Parzor's response to this existential demographic crisis is, in part, a historical impulse that seeks to preserve the heritage of the community for the future. Their looming extinction is the ultimate shift in power producing a historical sensibility that is marked by a heritage impulse; a dash to create a museum preserving for the future what is

671 C. L. Sharma.

672 Shernaz Cama, *UNESCO Supported Project Proposal for the Preservation and Promotion of the Parsi-Zoroastrian Culture and Heritage*, n.d.

673 Desai, *A Community at the Cross-Road*; C. Chandra Sekar, "Some Aspects of Parsi Demography," *Human Biology* 20, no. 2 (1948): 47–89; Axelrod, "Cultural and Historical Factors in the Population Decline of the Parsis of India"; Visaria, "Demographic Transition among Parsis."

674 Parinaz M. Gandhi, "Fertility to the Fore," *Parsiana*, July 3, 2014, http://www.parsiana.com/current-issue/articles.aspx?id=64TzQifXTdw=&issue=206.

675 "Only 87 Girls Born in the Parsi Community in 2011 | Parsi News Zoroastrian News," 87, accessed January 24, 2014, http://www.parsinews.net/only-87-girls-born-in-the-parsi-community-in-2011/3412.html.

676 Gandhi, "Fertility to the Fore."

about to be lost forever. In this process the historical thinking of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is being restored because they are both represent the present in the past for a future audience. We can see how demographic decline acted to revise history in the last sentence of *Parsi Zoroastrians*:

> In a scenario where the community is losing 10% of its population every decennial census, it is hoped that this exhibition will provide glimpses of the Parsi-Zoroastrian heritage and initiate the step of bridging this lacuna by generating interest in the community within the country, community and the world.[677]

This chapter asks, how have Parsis and the Parzor organisation responded with historical revisions to account for the contingent shifts in the power relationship between Parsis and Hindus brought about first by demographic decline and then globalisation? How has the persecution narrative been transformed and reproduced? Who is the story produced for? I argue that no sooner had the Parsis realigned themselves with Hindus in postcolonial India than the postcolonial moment gave way to a new wave of economic, migratory, and mediated globalisation. Parsi businesses are part of the global economy and Parsis are increasingly dispersing across the world, becoming part of a global migratory elite. Parsis have begun to revise their story as a metaphor to guide their relationship with the world and the new communities with whom they now live. Parzor is part of this process; however it is also a response to demographic decline as the base of the community in Gujarat and Mumbai is rapidly vanishing. Many Parsis are not having children and those that marry non-Parsis are often not raising their children as Zoroastrians. These shifts in power are part of the action that created *Parsi Zoroastrians*, and as a result we can recognise that the agent responsible for this revision is, once again, an augmented historian.

In some respects *Parsi Zoroastrians* represents the fulfilment of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* political vision of Parsis in the world having repaid their debt to Hindus. The story in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* finishes with Parsis living in Navsari with their Zoroastrian king, and Parsis are ascendant in the world. In the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* the treaty with Hindus is fulfilled in the common defence against a Muslim invasion. For Parzor this fulfilment takes the form of the Parsis' contribution to the independence movement and the development of modern India. However, *Parsi Zoroastrians* is different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* due to the Parsis' demographic decline, which makes the story both tragic and ironic. Zoroastrianism has

677 Cama and Singh, "Parsi Zoroastrians."

survived three millennia only to face extinction in part due to their success in the world and the choices of individuals not to have children. *Parsi Zoroastrians* is also different from *The Parsees*, which finishes with the Parsi ascendancy in colonial India, or *The Early History*, which finishes with the Parsis in India.

This chapter is divided into three parts, beginning with a discussion of their demographic decline before turning to Parzor's heritage response and then to globalisation. Here I understand *Parsi Zoroastrians* as a historiographical response to shifts in power. The response takes the form of a revision of Nanavutty's history to understand decolonisation, which in turn is a revision of Paymaster's explanation of the challenge to colonialism and Karaka's defence of British rule. All of these are in turn, are all ultimately revisions of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the oral story Bahman remediated into writing over four centuries ago.

13.1 The Parsis' demographic decline

I have identified four different Parsi responses to demographic decline. Firstly, in interviews many of my interlocutors expressed fatalism about the future of the community; their survival was out of their hands. For the second and third positions their decline is momentous, but they have different explanations for its occurrence. For the orthodox within the community it is because Parsis are marrying non-Parsis, and for reformers it is because of the obstinance of the orthodox who refuse to accept the children of mixed-marriages. Then there is Parzor's position, which seeks to reverse the decline yet also simultaneously preserve the community's traditions for the future. I will discuss each of these in turn in order to understand *Parsi Zoroastrians*.

Firstly, a fatalistic response is best illustrated with two snippets from my fieldwork. In Sanjan there is a wealthy elderly Parsi lady who lives near the column that featured in previous chapters. She owns much of the land in the area but her three children have left for Mumbai and have not married. She expressed a sadness that the community's end is most probably approaching but does not pressure her children to marry. The sense of decline is palpable. Her large bungalow is waterlogged with warped wooden boards in need of repair. A mixture of Zoroastrian and Hindu ornaments adorn the house, there are many pictures of Zarathustra, a Zoroastrian flame, and the Hindu God Ganesha. There are pictures of her deceased husband, her parents, his parents, and both of their grandparents. There are pictures of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, and a painting of the Sugar in the Milk, which can be seen in illustration eleven. She is kept

company by her Hindu friends, a Hindu who manages her farms, Hindu servants, their families, and some dogs.

Illustration 11: *Sugar in the Milk,* painting, photo taken June 2013 by Jesse Buck of a painting in Sanjan, Gujarat.

A similar inevitability is also felt amongst non-Parsis and was expressed by my Hindu Gujarati teacher in Navsari. He wrote a play that won a national prize in India called 'The Last Parsi'. It is a black comedy set in the future in which a journalist discovers that there are only two Parsis remaining in the world. He interviews them both and as a result each Parsi learns that they are the last of two. The two remaining Parsis then seek to kill each other in order to be known as the world's last Zoroastrian. The playwright conceived of the play in light of the community's minuscule and declining numbers following discussions with a Parsi friend. At the time there had been riots between Hindus and Muslims, which had left a number dead, and they reflected on what would happen to the Parsis if they were targeted. [678]

678 From an interview with Piyush Bhatt. Separately he tells the Sugar in the Milk story here Jesse Buck, *Piyush Bhatt of Navsari Tells the Story of the Parsis, the Sugar in the Milk* (Navsari, Gujarat, India, 2013), https://youtu.be/aF65H57fWys.

The second position is represented by the orthodox for whom demographic decline is due to the end of endogamy, or because young Parsis now marry non-Parsis. To be a Parsi Zoroastrian one's father must be a Parsi and for the most orthodox, both parents must be Parsis. For them it is an ethnic religion; Zoroastrianism is in their blood. They argue demographic decline stems from the high rate of exogamy, or marriage with non-Parsis, and the consequent loss of their offspring to the community. They argue that Zoroastrianism exists because, since their arrival in India, they have perpetuated their traditions through the practise of endogamy. Khojeste Mistree, a leading proponent of the orthodox position, argues that Zoroastrianism is an ethnic religion similar to Judaism. The priestly tradition is passed from father to son and if one generation are not initiated into the priesthood then the chain is broken, and future generations cannot be priests. He is suspicious of Muslims who convert to Zoroastrianism in Iran, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. Mistree argued these conversions are a strategy to gain asylum in the West by claiming persecution at the hands of Muslims. Similar to many orthodox Parsis, Mistree has no qualms with non-Zoroastrians adapting their ideas and practices, they cultivate the dialogue. However, only someone born to a Zoroastrian father can be initiated as a Zoroastrian. I witnessed the strength of the hostility to mixed marriages in Navsari when a Parsi mother recounted how she told her two sons that if they married a non-Parsi neither her nor their father would ever speak to them again.[679]

The third position is held by the reformers who similarly understands the decline as resulting from exogamy. However, for them the problem is the conservatism of the orthodox who will not accept into the Zoroastrian fold the children of a Parsi women who marry outside the community. They argue that the orthodox position is about money and resources because to be a Parsi is to have access to community resources. Parsi trusts

679 From an interview with Khojeste Mistree in Mumbai on 28/7/2013. Also see Mistree, *Zoroastrianism*; Nauzer K Bharucha, "Parsis Say No to Conversion," *The Times of India*, accessed September 9, 2014, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/Parsis-say-no-to-conversion/articleshow/6726134.cms; Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza, *Conversion Caucus* (Bombay: Dastur Kayoji Mirza Institute, Udvada, 1971); Mumbai Mirror, "Parsis Storm Zoroastrian College to Stop Conversion of Russian," *Mumbai Mirror*, February 20, 2010, http://www.mumbaimirror.com/mumbai/others/Parsis-storm-Zoroastrian-College-to-stop-conversion-of-Russian/articleshow/15993893.cms; Sharafi, "JUDGING CONVERSION TO ZOROASTRIANISM Behind the Scenes of the Parsi Panchayat Case (1908)"; Arzan Sam Wadia, "Khojeste Mistree & Yazdi Desai Respond to Dinshaw Tamboly," *Parsi Khabar* (blog), accessed September 9, 2014, http://parsikhabar.net/bombay-parsi-panchayat/khojeste-mistree-yazdi-desai-respond-to-dinshaw-tamboly/8077/; Khojeste P Mistree, "The Breakdown of the Zoroastrian Tradition as Viewed from a Contemporary Perspective," *Irano-Judaica II. Studies Relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture Throughout the Ages*, 1990, 227–54; Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha, "IS ZOROASTRIANISM PREACHED TO ALL MANKIND OR TO ONE PARTICUAR RACE?," in *The Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume: Being Papers on Iranian Subjects* (Bombay: Published for ... the Gatha Society by B.T. Anklesaria, 1918); Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza and Kaikhusroo Minocher JamaspAsa, *Antia's Acceptance: A Zoroastrian "Ahrmogih" (Heresy)* (S.l.: s.n., 1986); Kersey Antia, *The Argument for Acceptance: A Reply to the Three High Priests*, n.d.

and organisations provide subsidised housing in the most prestigious suburbs in Mumbai, schooling, and medical facilities. According to the reformers, the orthodox are simply fearful that a wave of low caste poor Hindu converts to Zoroastrianism will overwhelm community resources.

13.2 Parzor's heritage response to record a vanishing past for the future

The fourth position is expressed by Parzor, which has sought to both understand the decline while also preserving Zoroastrian and Parsi traditions for an uncertain future. Parzor has sought to archive and augment the Parsis' tangible and intangible heritage before it is lost. The unique Parsi Gujarati heritage is quickly vanishing and its decline is visible in the derelict boarded up Parsi mansions that dot southern Gujarat. As Parsis have emigrated from Gujarat to Mumbai and abroad, the existing cultural practices to transmit Zoroastrian traditions including historical knowledge have started to break down. Individuals and small families have found themselves in places where there are no other Parsis or at best a few. The possibility of finding a Parsi partner have consequently decreased. The lack of community and extended family infrastructure has undermined the existing processes for teaching their traditions to the next generation.[680]

Parzor's first mission was to understand the community's demographic decline, and a recent study Parzor supported has debunked the arguments of both reformers and the orthodox. The study argues, using a statistical analysis of marriages and population trends, that regardless of the acceptance of children from mixed marriages the population would continue to decline. If Parsis accept children who have either a Zoroastrian mother or father, the population will decline to 20,535 by 2051. If the status quo remains and Parsis accept children whose fathers are Zoroastrian then the population will be 20,122. If Parsis do not accept the children of any mixed marriage the population will be 19,136. Simply put, the population is declining because they are not having enough children. Many Parsis do not marry and those that do have small families. For the Parsi population to stabilise would require a tripling of the 2001 fertility levels.[681]

Parzor has launched the Jiyo Parsi scheme with the Indian government and other Parsi organisations to try to promote Parsi fertility. Jiyo Parsi translates as Live Parsi. While the Indian government seeks to control the population growth of other communities, for

680 "Reverse the Declining Trends," *Parsiana*, July 11, 2013, http://www.parsiana.com/current-issue/articles.aspx?id=9ih1ucpl888=&issue=235.

681 Shroff and Castro, "The Potential Impact of Intermarriage on the Population Decline of the Parsis of Mumbai, India."

the Parsis the program provides subsidies for fertility treatments and an advocacy campaign encouraging them to have children.[682] The advertising campaign to encourage them to have children has proved controversial, and is pictured in illustration twelve.[683]

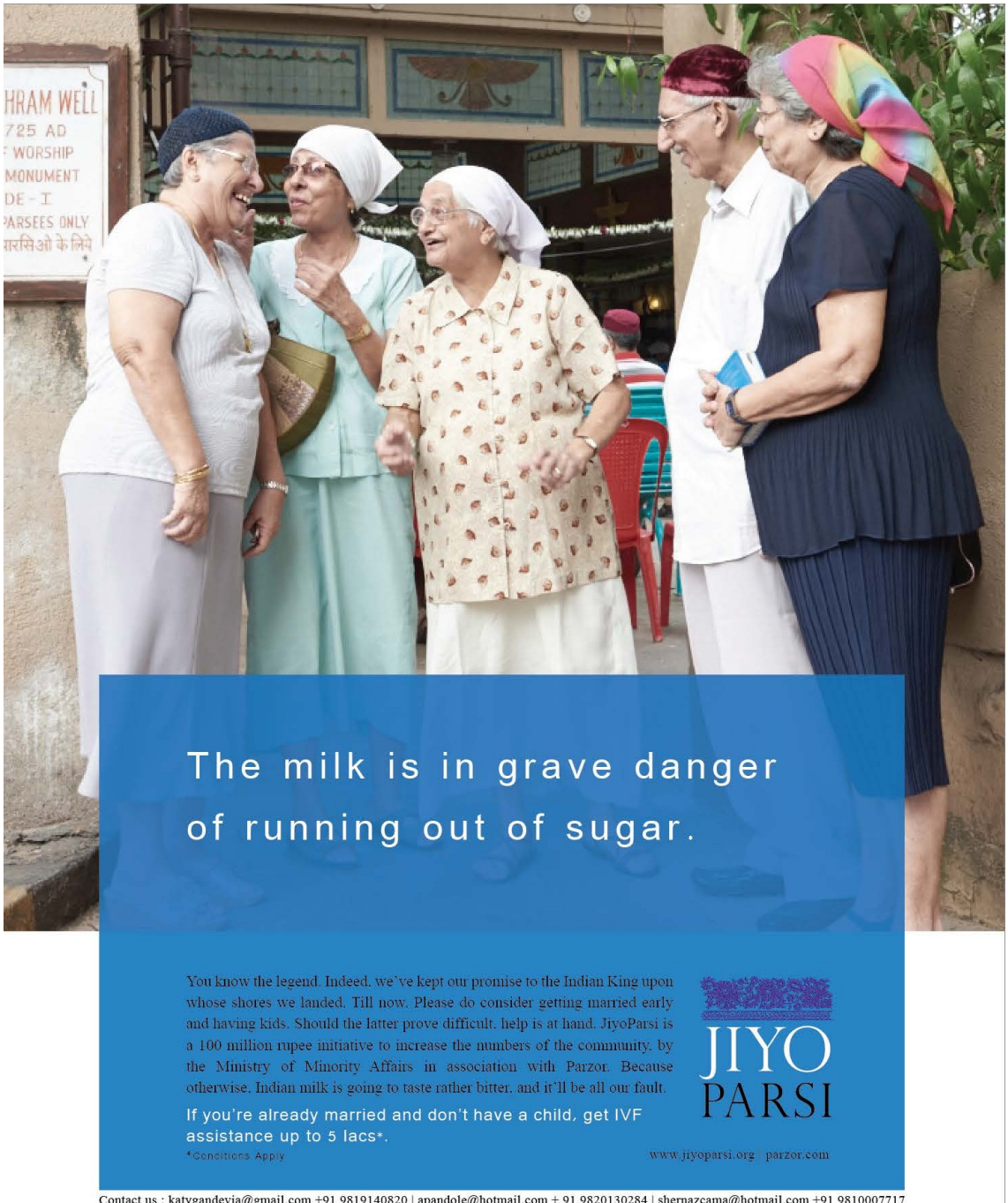

Illustration 12: *Jiyo Parsi Sugar in the Milk*, poster, 2014, courtesy of Parzor and Madison BMB.

682 "JIYO PARSI - Www.Jiyoparsi.Org (HTTP)," accessed May 30, 2017, http://www.jiyoparsi.org/.

683 Mridula Chari, "We Are Not Pandas: Irate Parsis Criticise Ads Urging Them to Procreate," Text, Scroll.in, accessed May 30, 2017, https://scroll.in/article/689268/we-are-not-pandas-irate-parsis-criticise-ads-urging-them-to-procreate.

Parzor has also responded historiographically in the form of a heritage response that has transformed existing archives to make them more permanent. Parzor has raised funds to preserve the manuscript archives of the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library in Navsari. It has the second largest collection of Zoroastrian documents in the world after the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai. Manuscripts have been scanned onto microfilm. An annex has been built to store documents in a climate controlled environment seeking to preserve them from the ravages of Southern Gujarat's monsoonal climate. The building of the library was commissioned in 1872 and for over a century membership was restricted to Parsis until 1992 when it was opened to other communities because there were so few Parsis left in Navsari. The library is run by local Hindus but has a Parsi committee who largely live in Mumbai. In 1992 the committee decided to refocus the library's mission to be a reading room for local residents from all communities and a resource for researchers into Zoroastrianism and the Parsis. The annex has two rooms to accommodate people researching Parsi history and Zoroastrianism.[684] The library is an example of how Parzor is repositioning the Parsis in a global world. In the photo in illustration thirteen, Hindus and Muslims can be seen reading with the portraits of Parsis hanging above them, reminding them of the community's contribution. The library is one of the many Parsi legacies to India and the world for a future in which there are no Parsis.

Parzor has also sought to preserve the oral heritage of the community as the traditional route for the transmission of this heritage breaks down. Teams of Gujarati speakers have recorded interviews in Southern Gujarat with priests and lay people. In an interview the leader of the project, Cama, stated that the problem for the transmission of Parsi culture is the breakdown of the joint family, meaning multiple generations no longer live together. She heard the Sugar in the Milk and other Parsi stories, and had learnt about Zoroastrianism from her grandmother with whom she and her parents lived. Nearly every Parsi I interviewed told me they heard the Sugar in the Milk from their grandmothers. One Parsi in Navsari told me:

> I learnt this from my grandmother when I was learning to walk.[685]

Emigration from Gujarat has also led to a loss of language. For Cama, Parsi culture is tied to Gujarati while many young Parsis can only speak English and Hindi. Cama does not lament the rise of the nuclear family, but believes it has undermined the transmission of Parsi culture which necessitates adaptation. The Parzor website, and the project more generally, are an attempt to transmit this knowledge using alternate media. In Delhi and

684 I stayed at the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library for three months during fieldwork.
685 Aadil Jokhi.

outside of India, Parsi Gujarati songs, stories, and religious rites are being translated into English.

Illustration 13: Jesse Buck. *First Dastoor Meherjirana Library*, photo, June 2013, Sanjan, Gujarat.

Parzor's heritage impulse produces a similar historical sensibility to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. They both remediate knowledge that has been transmitted orally. In part both are motivated by a sense that our link to the past is precarious and liable to break. Both histories come into existence due to large changes in power relations and conventions for historical knowledge. For the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* these were Mughal rule, Indo-Persian historiography, and a convention for written historical narratives. Parzor is a response to the breakdown in the process by which Parsi and Zoroastrian knowledge is transmitted and the community's changing place in the world. Both are impulses to preserve the past, but are also a snapshot of the moment when it is archived. They are snapshots of a present day understanding of the past for an audience of the future.

13.3 Globalisation and the Parsis' place in the world

Parzor's heritage sensibility is also augmented by globalisation. The situation for Parsis today is significantly different from the time of Nanavutty and earlier postcolonial histories, which were nationalist revisions to explain decolonisation. *Parsi Zoroastrians* is a

step removed from colonialism as its revisions seek to explain globalisation. Cama stated in an interview that the Parzor project was born in 1999 as the effects of globalisation began to be felt. The integration of Parsi companies into the global economy, emigration to the West, and the Internet have all transformed the power relationships that existing historical accounts cannot explain. Whereas previously Parsis were negotiating with Hindus, the British, Muslims, and Mughals, now they are seeking a place in a world whose contours of power we still cannot grasp. The Parsis face the same challenge as other national elites: how to transition to the global elite. *Parsi Zoroastrians* makes a status claim for the community's membership of this elite by offering the Parsis' historical experience to the world as a guide to navigate globalisation. The lesson offered is how to maintain one's own distinct culture yet also mix and be loyal at the same. Parzor situates itself within the context of a globalising culture.

For the argument of this thesis these changes will be termed globalisation, which is understood as increased international economic integration, migration, and mass mediation.[686] Whether the shifts in the post-Cold War era were the beginnings of globalisation or whether there were earlier waves is a matter of debate.[687] For instance, between 1870 and 1914 there was a boom in international trade, and earlier still there was the Silk Road.[688] The spread of humanity across the planet attests to the very long history of migration.

Nevertheless, the pace of recent economic globalisation has changed the relationship between the Parsis, Hindus, and the world. Parsis are once again deeply involved with communities other than Hindus and Muslims. Conglomerates such as the Tatas operate in a global economy rather than prospering solely through close ties to the Indian state. For example, Tata Consulting operates across the Western world and is the largest provider of information technology outsourcing in India. Tata Communications is one of the six companies that provide the backbone for the Internet. In 2008 the Tata Group purchased the luxury automotive group Jaguar, a source of nationalist pride in India.[689]

686 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Juli L. Gittinger, "Is There Such a Thing as 'Cyberimperialism?,'" *Continuum* 28, no. 4 (July 4, 2014): 509–19.

687 Paul Hirst, Grahame Thompson, and Simon Bromley, *Globalization in Question* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); David Held and Anthony G McGrew, *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).

688 Amartya Sen, "Democracy and Its Global Roots: Why Democracy Is Not the Same as Westernization," *The New Republic*, October 6, 2003, http://www.columbia.edu/itc/sipa/U6800/readings-sm/sen_democracy.pdf.

689 Shalendra D Sharma, *China and India in the Age of Globalization* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 131.

In order to understand how economic globalisation transformed the Parsis it is necessary to briefly detail India's re-engagement with global trade. In 1991 the Indian government began lifting restrictions on international trade that had been in place since independence. These restrictions were part of a national economic self-sufficiency policy, which came about due to the independence movement's understanding of how the British colonised India through trade. In the first three decades following independence the Congress implemented a policy of state directed development. Capital flows were restricted, the importation of goods required authorisation from the government, and industrial policy was tightly controlled through a licensing regime. There were numerous attempts at economic liberalisation, and from 1980 the policy was more pro-business. Yet, 1991 was a crucial year due to a balance of payments crisis, which resulted from a doubling of government expenditure in the five years leading up to 1989 and the Gulf War in 1990. As a consequence of the war Indian workers in the Gulf were displaced and the flow of remittances declined sharply. The country's foreign exchange reserves rapidly decreased and by June 1991 they could only cover the next two weeks of imports. The government faced the prospect of a default. Loans from the International Monetary Fund came with conditions that the government open the economy to the international market.[690] From this point on successive Indian governments have liberalised the economy, and reintegrated into global trade networks.

Emigration has changed the audience for historical revisions and organisations such as Parzor. In part its audience is Parsis in India and abroad together with researchers and others with an interest in their culture. Emigration has provoked revisions to explain and help guide their relationship with the dominant non-Hindu communities amongst whom many now live. Parzor and non-Indian Parsi organisations speak to the diaspora in Canada, the UK, USA, and Australia. An example of how the Sugar in the Milk is used in a global context can be seen in the first Pacific regional convention of the National Federation of Asians of Indian Origin. A Parsi addressing the convention said if "we neglect building the right image today, we will not have the majority support when we need it most." It was argued that the harassment of Indians in

> Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Malaysia, England and the Fiji Islands [was] because they neglected their image...Recounting the arrival of Parsis in India and the fabled sugar and milk episode of the initial landing in Sanjan...to illustrate the successful integration of

690 Sharma, 70–95; Chanchal Kumar Sharma, "A Discursive Dominance Theory of Economic Reform Sustainability: The Case of India," *India Review* 10, no. 2 (April 1, 2011): 126–84.

> Parsis in India via the adoption of Indian dress, language and customs and the pursuit of hard work, honesty and charity and urged Indians in the US...to send "a clear and resounding message... that we are Americans first and we will work hard for America's prosperity and [that] we want to be equal partners in this enterprise called the USA."[691]

The Sugar in the Milk is used as a guiding allegory for the Parsis' new relationships just as the story facilitated the preservation of Zoroastrianism in India. For example, the story was retold in a speech to the UK's House of Lords by a British-Indian-Parsi peer and on the website for the Zoroastrian Association Western Australia.[692] The Sugar in the Milk is depicted in a children's books published by Parzor and another by Parsis in North America.[693] A painting from one of these books is reproduced in illustration fourteen and is also remediated in *Parsi Zoroastrians*.

As a result of globalisation, emigration, and the web the language of *Parsi Zoroastrians* is English. Parzor is remediating oral Gujarati traditions to tape, print, for archival purposes but also translating Parsi and Zoroastrian traditions to English for the web. English is a pragmatic choice given that in 2014 54.8% of web sites were in English.[694] However, *Parsi Zoroastrians* also includes Avestan, the three millennia old language in which Zarathustra's hymns were composed. It is the only revision studied in this thesis to use Avestan, and it does so in both text and videos of Parsi priests reciting these hymns.

Parsi Zoroastrians makes a status claim for the Parsis' place amidst globalisation with a historical structure in which stages are collapsed into an assertion that Parsis have never been anything but modern. We can see this in the claim that amidst the contemporary problem of climate change, the solution anachronistically predates the problem. The Parzor site states:

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691 Arnavaz Mama, "Parsis as Image Builders," *Parsiana*, August 1990.

692 Karan Bilimoria, "Minority Ethnic and Religious Communities: Cultural and Economic Contribution," www.parliament.co.uk, accessed September 28, 2014, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/120524-0001.htm#12052458000058; Rita Payne, "The Many Identities of Lord Karan Bilimoria," accessed August 6, 2014, http://www.eturbonews.com/44280/many-identities-lord-karan-bilimoria; Dadrawala, "The Parsees, Their History and Contribution to the Indian Society."

693 Rukshana Shroff and Kerman Mehta, *Joyous Flame: The Parsi Zoroastrians* (Delhi: The PARZOR Foundation, 2011); Lorraine N. Moos, *My Simple Book of Zoroastrianism* (New Delhi: Business Communicators, 1996); *In Search of My God.* (Los Angeles: Lost Generation Publication, 1978).

694 Gittinger, "Is There Such a Thing as 'cyberimperialism?"

> Zoroastrianism has been called 'the world's first ecological religion' and it is an integral part of our cultural heritage.[695]

Illustration 14: *Sugar in the Milk in a children's book*, painting, in In Search of My God, (Los Angeles: Lost Generation Publication, 1978). p 193.

In a global context, the Sugar in the Milk and the Parsi story is offered by Parzor as a guide for a globalising world in how to preserve one's own culture yet also mix. In an interview, Cama said that Zoroastrianism has always been multi-cultural straddling the East and West. Continuing she stated that the Zoroastrian empires of ancient Iran were multi-religious and multi-ethnic. The first sentence on the home page of their website states:

> The Preservation of Culture and Heritage in an increasingly mono-cultural modern world is the challenge facing communities today.[696]

Parsi Zoroastrians makes a status claim for the Parsis' place amongst a global elite by using the markers of liberalism. This is not new for Parsis. From the colonial era much of the community has been liberal minded. They supported and have profited from capitalism, property rights, the rule of law, representative democracy, and human rights. Parzor's claim can be seen in how human rights, one of the markers of the global liberal

695 Cama, "UNESCO ASSISTED PARSI ZOROASTRIAN PROJECT."
696 Cama.

minded elite, is claimed to have first developed with a Zoroastrian king. This can be seen in a screenshot of *Parsi Zoroastrians* in illustration fifteen.

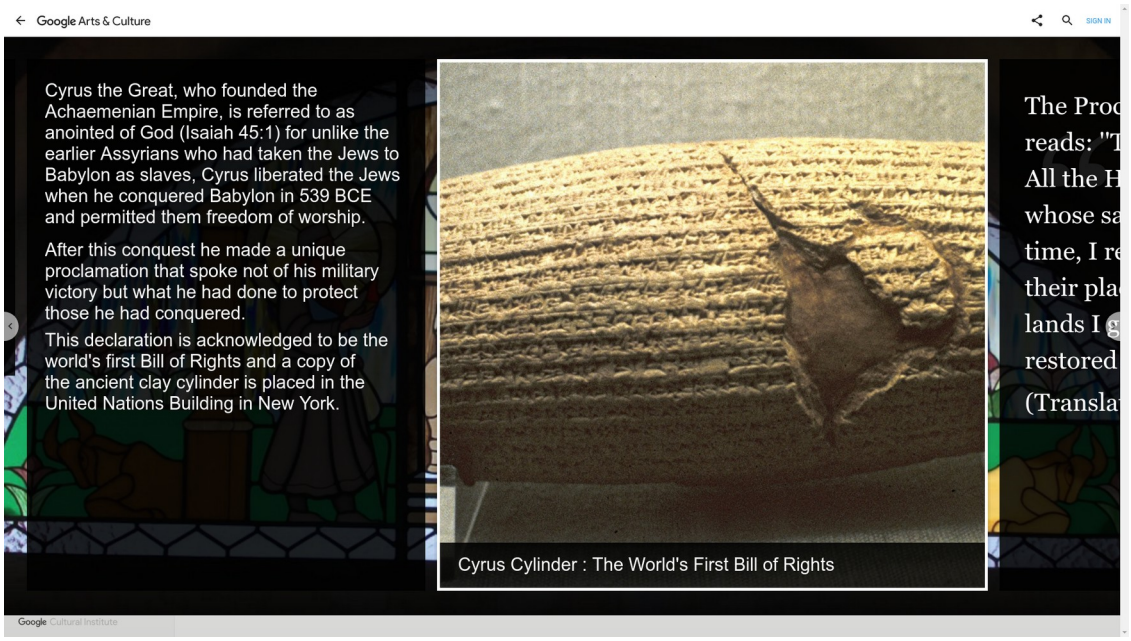

Illustration 15: Shernaz Cama and Vanshika Singh, *Parsi Zoroastrians: Cyrus Cylinder*, screenshot, Google Arts & Culture, accessed 5 July 2017, https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/parsi-zoroastrians-from-persia-to-akbar-s-court/gQXXqzxD?hl=en-GB.

Postcolonial and global Parsi histories have a different relationship to Muslims compared to the colonial and precolonial. I am not suggesting that Parsis are no longer hostile towards Islam and Muslims, nor I am suggesting their earlier hostility was unfounded.[697] Rather, this hostility is not as central to their story as it was in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, *The Parsees*, and *The Early History*, because ethnicity has become more important in the postcolonial period. The degree of vitriol in postcolonial histories is far less than either the colonial or precolonial. In some respects, postcolonial histories resolve the historiographical debates of the late colonial period in which Parsis who aligned themselves with Iran downplayed the persecution narrative. For many postcolonial histories it is ethnic Muslim Arabs who persecuted Iranian Zoroastrians; persecution is both ethnic and religious. Thus, for Nanavutty:

> Under the Arabs, Iranians were forcibly converted to Islam.[698]

On the Parzor Google site it is written:

> The last Zoroastrian King Yazdegird III was defeated in the Battle of Nihavand (641CE) by the Arabs.

697 During fieldwork countless Parsis expressed sentiments hostile towards Islam and Muslims.
698 Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, 39.

On the next pane the story continues:

> The defeat of the Persian King — King Yazdegird III had far reaching consequences for the Zoroastrian community as the conquerors spread their religion. Several chose the new religion - Islam and the past, through choice, coercion, and conversion was rapidly lost. A few who resisted conversion to Islam were required to pay a Jizya tax and later suffered persecution.[699]

For Parzor, the persecution narrative is used to create a different type of alliance. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, *The Parsees*, and *The Early History* use their persecution at the hands of Muslims to create an alliance with either Hindus or the British. On the Parzor site Hindus and the British are not mentioned and the revision finishes with Akbar. On their *Parsi Zoroastrians* site it is written:

> Across the centuries, Indian plurality permitted the Zoroastrian religion, not only to survive but flourish.[700]

The site continues:

> Thus, it is in India that Zoroastrianism has found a home.[701]

Ironically Akbar becomes the last Indian king:

> Emperor Akbar, known in history for encouraging and accommodating diversity, met the Parsi Priest of Navsari — the First Dastur Meherjirana and impressed by his knowledge and piety wished to involve him in the syncretic Din-i-Ilahi, which was Akbar's plan for a holistic faith uniting all his people

In many respects Parzor is the ironic fulfilment of the post-treaty political vision of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. Zoroastrianism has risen and fallen in battles with many other empires but importantly, the tail end of their civilisation survived due to Indian munificence. In the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* this debt was repaid with battles in defence of a Hindu kingdom against an invasion by Muslims. The poem finishes with Parsi sovereignty in Navsari. In the case of *Parsi Zoroastrians* this debt has been repaid by the contribution of Parsis to the anti-colonial struggle and Indian modernity. With globalisation Parsis now find themselves in the world. However, despite millennia of recovering from defeats and persecution at the hands of others, their mission to perpetuate the teachings of Zarathustra is coming to a close through their own choice. While the living remnant of

699 Cama and Singh, "Parsi Zoroastrians."
700 Cama and Singh.
701 Cama and Singh.

Zoroastrianism is passing, Parzor is attempting to transmit Zoroastrian traditions and stories into the future.

14. How the oral Sugar in the Milk story became historical

The Sugar in the Milk does not appear in colonial era print histories and did not feature in the debates over the accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* even though it was well-known at the time. Parsis did not publicise this openly allegorical story.[702] Yet today the Sugar in the Milk is the dominant version of the Parsi story and is thus a window into the Parsis' contemporary historical sensibility. The importance of the Sugar in the Milk was highlighted in an interview with Cama in which she stated that the story was included "because it is part of what is expected by a Parsi and non-Parsi audience". In this chapter I ask, how have historiographical conventions shifted to warrant the inclusion of the Sugar in the Milk on the Parzor site, and what does this tell us about contemporary historical consciousness?

I argue the excessive focus on empiricism in the colonial era has declined in the post-World War II and postcolonial period, creating a space for broader definitions of history and histories that use alternative conventions for marking a work as historical. Historical conventions have shifted from the era of Paymaster and Modi in which a work was considered to be historical if its account was premised upon material derived from a sensory experience that could be corroborated. There have been a series of often inter-related shifts producing historical revisions using a variety of conventions and expressing a host of different historical sensibilities. There are still empirical historical accounts, however they often additionally now include non-empirical sources such as the oral Sugar in the Milk story. There has also been a greater acceptability of non-conventional sensibilities such as personal testimony, collective memory, myths, re-enactment, and historical fiction in novels, plays, film, and television. Greater acceptability is part of a broadening of who has authority to narrate history to include people who do not identify as historians, which is tied to a greater acceptability of oral history. These trends are central for Parzor and the oral Sugar in the Milk story. Postcolonial rule in India has led to the acceptability of openly didactic history in which the past is used to guide the present rather than uncover what happened. The Sugar in the Milk is part of this shift to an

702 It can be ascertained that the Sugar in the Milk story was known in the first half of the twentieth century because Shernaz Cama stated that elderly Parsis in Gujarat in interviews would report that they learnt the story when they were young. Also, in interviews I conducted elderly Parsis would describe how they learnt it from their parents and grandparents.

unashamedly allegorical historical sensibility in which the present is projected onto the past. The didactic present has subsumed empirical history.

For the argument of the thesis, the shift in historiographical conventions with the decline of empiricism and the rise of didactic history are part of a process that restores the historical sensibility of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. Bringing together the arguments from previous chapters it can then be said that the historiographical agent producing Parzor's revision exists in the space between shifts in historiographical conventions together with shifts in power between Parsis and other communities with the end of colonial rule, globalisation, and demographic decline. These shifts have resulted in a historical sensibility that uses the past to educate a future audience through a memorable story. As we shall see in the next chapter, I argue this sensibility is further enhanced by the augmentation of the web, which collapses our sense of distance to the past. History has become a snapshot of the present for the future. In a world in which the Parsis are disappearing, the present is represented in the past in order to educate a future non-Parsi audience.

14.1 A space for sugar in the empirical milk

Parzor and the Sugar in the Milk need to be understood in the context of the post World War II era in which there has been a global shift in the acceptability of historical narratives that are not fully empirical. in this context. The excessive empirical focus of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has faded. Simply put, the question of evidence and accuracy is no longer the central question of history. For a reader, viewer, or listener, the believability of a historical story is not solely established by an author's use of a historical method based upon corroboration. The self-assuredness of the European civilisational mission premised upon a theory of historical development has come unstuck with decolonisation and the horror of two great civil wars. There has been a similar loss in confidence that history is a scientific endeavour in which historians can narrate the past through a method that allows us to time travel into the past and recreate it in a narrative form for a contemporary audience. While this thesis is not the place for a detailed account of why and how this has occurred, what is relevant for my argument is that there has been a shift in historiographical conventions, and this shift has augmented Parzor in ways that are similar Bahman and his *Qesse-ye Sanjan*.[703]

703 Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century from Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*; Paul A. Roth, "The Disappearance of the Empirical: Some Reflections on Contemporary Culture Theory and Historiography," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 1, no. 3 (October 1, 2007): 271–92; Karl R Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

Of course, Parsis have nonetheless maintained an empirical sensibility and some sort of commitment to a historical account based upon sources that can be corroborated. The early twentieth century debates continue today, albeit in a far reduced form. For instance, one Parsi has continued to engage in these debates from the 1970s through to his publication of a new translation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* into English, which appeared in 1991.[704] His translation is popular amongst Parsis today and is published by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. Another Parsi connected with Parzor wrote a dissertation on the archaeological dig at Sanjan in order to date and verify their arrival in India.[705]

At the same time the positivist sensibility that characterised Paymaster has almost completely faded along with a theory of universal historical change that is justified through the use of empirical evidence. A deterministic reading of historical change in which one stage follows the next is no longer fashionable. Today there are linguistic legacies such as the division of the world into developed and undeveloped, or the synonymous use of modern and Western, although this is changing.[706] This legacy can also be seen in how the relationship between the West and the Islamic world is imagined historically. The refrain that Muslims need to modernise, read the *Quran* contextually, and not oppress women has barely shifted since the nineteenth century.

The loosening of historical conventions has created a space for scholarly empirical print histories that subsume the Sugar in the Milk. The organising principle and method rely on corroborating material in order to advance an argument about how the Parsis came to be. Yet unlike the colonial era histories, the Sugar in the Milk is narrated to illustrate their argument that Parsis contribute, are loyal, and preserve their own traditions. It is a more effective way to illustrate their contention because it is memorable and grabs the readers attention. They do not assert that there was a king with milk and a priest with sugar. The first such account was published in 1965 by Sohrab Katrak and is titled *Who are the Parsees?* Katrak combines versions of the encounter drawing from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan, The Parsees*, and the Sugar in the Milk.[707] In another scholarly account of the Parsis' contribution to India the Sugar in the Milk is described as:

704 H E Eduljee, "Kisseh-I-Sanjan: Introduction (1)," *Parsiana*, August 1971; H E Eduljee, "Kisseh-I-Sanjan: An A Bridged Translation (2)," *Parsiana*, September 1971; H E Eduljee, "The Date of Zoroaster," *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* 48 (1980); Eduljee, *Kisseh-i Sanjan*.

705 Nanji and Dhalla, "The Landing of the Zoroastrians at Sanjan: The Archaeological Evidence"; Nanji, *Mariners and Merchants*.

706 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "From Civilization to Globalization: The 'West' as a Shifting Signifier in Indian Modernity," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2012): 138–52.

707 Sorab K H Katrak, *Who Are the Parsees* (Karachi: n.p., 1965), 107–10.

> the cultural and social policy of the Parsis to date, notwithstanding their determination to uphold their separate religious identity.[708]

One of the most influential histories expressing this sensibility is Nanavutty's *The Parsis*, which was discussed in chapter twelve and thirteen. Nanavutty revises earlier histories but lets the oral account speak for itself, rendering in prose a Gujarati Parsi song version of the Sugar in the Milk. Her reason for narrating the story is:

> A far more vivid account of the meeting between the Persian refugees and Jadhav Rana, than that in the Kissa is given in the Gujarati Garbas, group songs and dances, composed by the Parsis and sung by Parsi women on such happy occasions as Navjotes and weddings.[709]

A more recent revision expressing this sensibility was published in 2002 by two Parsi history professors, titled *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*.[710] It is by far the most scholarly account of their history. The authors seek to establish the authority of their version with corroborating material and a nuanced study of why Parsis left Iran and their place in India. The organising principle is a modern print style history in which events are read in their time and context. Parsi traditions are recounted as part of a broad historical overview of the different explanations for how they came to be. The Sugar in the Milk is combined with the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and other Parsi traditions as part of a project to catalogue Parsi history.[711]

There are also Parsis for whom the story is a representation of what actually happened, or a representation of the past in the past. This was expressed to me in an interview with a Parsi priest who said these descriptions of a meeting between a king with milk and a priest with sugar are not allegorical or metaphorical stories. Rather, he said:

> The story has some ring of truth as something like that must have happened because a well-known popular story could not come out of fiction.[712]

He also explained they must be accurate because we can see these practices amongst the Parsis today.

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708 Nivedita Mehta, "Parsi Contribution to the Art and Cultural Life of India," in *The Sugar in the Milk: The Parsis in India*, ed. Ram Singh and Nancy Singh (Delhi: I.S.P.C.K., 1986), 31.
709 Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, 40.
710 Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*.
711 Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, 27.
712 From an interview with Royinton Peer on 15/7/2013 in Navsari, Gujarat.

However, as I will show, Parzor goes much further than this and is the next iteration of a Parsi historical sensibility. The above accounts place a primacy on an empiricist approach to the past and draw upon other sensibilities in the service of their argument. Parzor is the inversion because empiricism serves a didactic purpose. Simply put, the didactic is primary.

14.2 Authorial authority to narrate history

Parzor also needs to be understood within broader shifts in authorial authority. With the acceptability of popular historical sensibilities there has also been a concomitant shift in who has authority to narrate history. The custodians of the past are no longer professional historians who establish their status through a historical method based upon corroboration. There was a moment in which professional historians reigned and that was tied to the dominance of an empirical historical sensibility. But either side of the empirical moment there is no such thing as a historian, there are just people who narrate history. Today there is a developing acceptability of history produced by a range of people. History can be experienced though performances in oral stories, monuments, street names, historical fiction in novels, films and TV to documentaries, re-enactments, and memories of a group experience passed through generations.[713] The result of this growing popularity of diverse forms of history is that authority to narrate history is not confined to historians using an agreed upon historical method. Anyone can narrate the past and, in a sense, this shift is a democratisation of history. Today historical narration is popular; but history in general is not strictly empirical and largely not produced by academics. As I will show in the next chapter, this trend is being accentuated with the use of the web.

It is worth noting the gender shift in who has authority to narrate history, which has taken place over the last forty years. Nearly all the histories I examined in the colonial and precolonial period were composed by men. Yet today many of the most popular Parsi histories are composed by women. Nanavutty, the two professors mentioned above, Mody, and Cama are all women.

713 Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness"; Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations* 26, no. 1 (1989): 7–24; Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); McCalman and Pickering, *Historical Reenactment*; Seixas, "Introduction"; Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried out: History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Greg Dening, "Performing on the Beaches of the Mind: An Essay," *History and Theory* 41, no. 1 (February 1, 2002): 1–24; Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations*, no. 69 (January 1, 2000): 127–50.

An example of a popular sensibility relevant to the Parsis is the genre of historical fiction. Novels and films combine a mixture of fictional and non-fictional stories, events, and characters. They intend to transport the readers or viewers into the personal experiences of fictional characters at a historical moment, or of historical figures reimagined through fiction. A well-known Indian example of this genre is Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which tells a fantastical story of children all born at the moment of Indian independence in order to tell a history of the postcolonial period.[714] A Parsi authored example of this form featuring the Sugar in the Milk is the 1991 novel *Cracking India* and its remediation into the 1998 film *1947 Earth*.[715] This story is set in Lahore as tensions rise between Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs with the approach of Partition. In the novel the Sugar in the Milk is narrated as part of a dialogue amongst a Parsi family and friends as they become anxious for their future. History is used as an instructive guide for the present and future as the narrator seeks to calm their anxiety. At the end of the story he establishes the purpose and meaning of its rendition saying:

> Let whoever wishes rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We will abide by the rules of their land!

A Parsi then suggests that they would be safer moving to Mumbai away from Muslim majority Lahore due to a

> thirteen-hundred-year-old memory of conversions by the Arab sword.

The narrator replies by recounting their experience with the Mughals saying

> Emperor Akbar invited Zarathushti scholars to his darbar: he said he'd become a Parsee if he could...but we gave our oath to the Hindu Prince that we wouldn't proselytize.[716]

For the retelling of the Sugar in the Milk the shift in authorial authority is important because it is popular history. The broader shift in the acceptability of non-conventional genres and authority to narrate history has created a space for revisions such as *Parsi Zoroastrians*. The project catalogues different popular expressions of historical consciousness.

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714 Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (New York: Knopf, 1981); Parsi examples of this genre are: Mistry, *A Fine Balance*; Mistry, *Such a Long Journey*; Desai, *The Memory of Elephants*.

715 Sidhwa, *Cracking India*, 46–49; Aamir Khan and Deepa Metha, *1947 Earth* (Mumbai: Shemaroo Entertainment, 1998).

716 Sidhwa, *Cracking India*, 46–49.

14.3 The restoration of oral historical sources

Linked to historical authority is the acceptability of oral sources and accounts by non-historians. In the colonial era Parsis largely did not directly cite their oral tradition, largely confining themselves to manuscripts and print sources. An oral tradition was sourced only if it appeared in a print work by a European and the legitimising brush of their methods. In the postcolonial and post-war periods this convention has faded, leading to a celebration of oral traditions. Parzor remediates oral traditions such as the Sugar in the Milk. In part this is a restoration of a similar relationship to sources as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. Both seek to create a sense of immediacy with oral accounts, and are both at the point of transition from one medium to another. However, they differ insofar as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* only remediates an oral account whereas *Parsi Zoroastrians* remediates stories from multiple media.

I am not suggesting that the oral tradition vanished in the colonial period and has now reappeared. From the story's remediation into manuscript with the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* through to today, the Parsi oral tradition was vibrant. This shift is illustrated by the column debates in which the opponents disputed the factuality of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* account because it came from an oral tradition. At the time of the column debates the oral Sugar in the Milk story was well known but not mentioned in text. We can ascertain it was known because Parzor has recorded elderly Parsis recounting how they were taught the story as children. Similarly, in my interviews elderly Parsis in Navsari recounted that they knew the story from childhood. Yet the first print account that references the story is a 1940 polemic against mixed marriages.[717] More broadly, the shift in the acceptability of oral traditions represents a restoration because oral history is not new and in many respects is the oldest form of history.[718] Indeed, there is a convincing argument that oral history has been practised continuously from antiquity through to today.[719] It was simply submerged in the high era of the print-history-human because orality was no longer considered historical.

In the post-World War II era there has been an increasing acceptance of orality as a source for historical narratives and also as a legitimate narrative medium in its own right. The former is referred to as oral history in which a historian creates a narrative from oral interviews with a person who remembers either their experience of an event or a

717 Davar, *Parsis and Racial Suicide*, 2.
718 Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 25.
719 Thompson, 25–81; For instance, Herodotus based his history, in part, on oral accounts. Herodotus, *The histories*, trans. Tom Holland and Paul Cartledge, 2015.

collective memory that has been passed through generations. In other words, this is recording an oral account in either audio or video and then its remediation into either a print or video based account. The growing acceptability of this form of history can be seen in a statement by The North American Oral History Association that oral history was established in 1948

> when Columbia University historian Allan Nevins began recording the memoirs of persons significant in American life.[720]

The Association was founded in 1967 and in the United Kingdom the Oral History Society was founded six years later.[721] There has been a proliferation of oral histories produced over this period and particularly over the last two decades.[722]

Parzor is emblematic of the oral history movement because it archives and refashions oral stories and knowledge. Parzor was part of the World Oral Literature Project that was established by the University of Cambridge in 2009 until it ended in 2013.[723] This project's website describes it as an

> urgent global initiative to document and make accessible endangered oral literatures before they disappear without record.[724]

Of course, the term oral literature has been criticised on the grounds that it is anachronistic as literature came into existence with writing; or as Ong pithily states:

> it is rather like thinking of horses as auto-mobiles without wheels.[725]

I would suggest however that what can be gleaned from Parzor's association with the World Oral Literature Project, is how oral history, or the problematic title of oral literature, has become acceptable.

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720 Cited in Alistair Thomson, "Fifty Years On: An International Perspective on Oral History," *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 2 (1998): 581.

721 Paul Thompson, "Oral History in North America," *Oral History* 3, no. 1 (1975): 26–40; Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 74.

722 For instance Jurgen Matthaus, ed., *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations*, Oxford Oral History Series (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Donald J. Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation*, Oxford Oral History Series (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); David King Dunaway and Molly Beer, *Singing Out: An Oral History of America's Folk Music Revivals*, Oxford Oral History Series (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Russell L. Riley, *Inside the Clinton White House: An Oral History*, Oxford Oral History Series (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Anna Shternshis, *When Sonia Met Boris: An Oral History of Jewish Life under Stalin*, Oxford Oral History Series (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

723 From an interview with Shernaz Cama.

724 "World Oral Literature Project: Home," accessed March 13, 2016, http://www.oralliterature.org/.

725 Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*, 12.

The use of oral sources presents a challenge for the empirical historian because of the difficulty of corroboration. It is helpful to think through how two oral historians could verify and engage in a historical debate based upon an oral account of the Parsis' arrival compared with two historians writing about the 1857 uprising against British rule using manuscripts, print, and archaeological sources. The latter can critique each other's reading of sources, but for the former orality constitutes a different type of source because of its relative lack of durability and reproducibility. A person's memory of an event changes over time as the story or event is re-remembered. The result is that there is no canonical version that two historians can debate. One response by oral historians has been to develop agreed upon methods in order to generate repeatable interviews. These are thought to address the problem because two separate interviews with the same interviewee will produce similar responses.

However, there have been far more interesting methodological approaches than using oral sources to understand what happened. For instance, the gap between how an event or person is remembered can be compared with other archival sources such as print. The gap is not a problem but offers insights into the process of producing collective memories.[726] Another approach is to write simultaneous narratives that are based on the two different types of sources in which readers can choose to follow the account of the author, the community in question, or the colonial archive.[727] Yet another example is for a historian to ethnographically write themselves into the process of bringing together a film archive and a people's oral memory.[728] These approaches are different from corroboration because the point is not to navigate a variety sources in order to produce an authoritative account of what actually happened, but to take the reader on a journey into the minds of those who remember what happened. These studies examine the malleability of memory not in a pejorative sense, but one of intrigue.

In the case of *Parsi Zoroastrians*, the primacy afforded to oral rather than textual sources is part of a claim that Parsis are the rightful custodians of Zoroastrianism. Cama expressed this in an interview saying "the oral precedes the textual". In other words, textual and scientific knowledge confirm the oral tradition, and this focus on orality is symptomatic of a broader shift. One of the supervisors for her dissertation was the scholar of Zoroastrianism Mary Boyce, who is celebrated by Parsis. Boyce argues against the position of Europeans and a number of Parsis in the nineteenth century that

726 Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out*.
727 Skaria, *Hybrid Histories*.
728 Thomas, "Taking Them Back."

Zoroastrianism had become corrupted over time and that the authentic tradition existed in the texts. Privileging a textual understanding elevated philologists, who could decipher ancient texts, as the authoritative voice of Zoroastrianism over the oral practices that had been passed between countless generations of Zoroastrians. Rather, Boyce argues it is the Parsis and their priests who are the authentic repository of Zoroastrian knowledge, and their understanding of Zoroastrianism mirrors the texts.[729] Boyce's scholarship is deployed by Parsis and organisations such as Parzor in order to assert that they are the authoritative voice of Zoroastrianism, while also maintaining that understanding Zarathustra's teachings is a collaborative effort.

The restoration of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* historical sensibility in *Parsi Zoroastrians* is in part due to the remediation of oral sources to the web, which collapses a sense of distance to the past. Both the manuscript *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and Parzor's web version seek to create a sense of immediacy with the original medium while making themselves invisible. In other words, they seek to transport us into how an oral version of the story is narrated. However, when the Sugar in the Milk is narrated orally its audience and the subject are in the present. Central for my argument is the sense of distance created by this type of immediacy is with the oral present rather than the past. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* provides a snapshot of how Parsis understood the world historically in 1599. *Parsi Zoroastrians* provides a snapshot of how Parsis understood the world historically in the first decades of the twenty-first century. Neither provides an insight into how Parsis viewed the world when they first arrived in India a millennia ago. They are windows into the ideas of the time in which they are composed rather than into the events they narrate.

Nevertheless, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and *Parsi Zoroastrians* are different from an oral version of the Sugar in the Milk insofar as their audience is in the future. An oral account is for a contemporary immediate purpose. The process of remediating precarious oral knowledge augments a historian creating the possibility of an audience in the future. The restoration is a result of not only the Parsis' demographic decline but the use of oral sources with low durability. Both *Parsi Zoroastrians* and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* seek to guide the future with a historical account of today.

14.4 The restoration of Indian didactic history

The restoration of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* sensibility is also due to the postcolonial restoration of an Indian didactic sensibility. That is, the primary purposes of historical narration is to

729 Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrianism: Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour*, vol. no. 7. (Costa Mesa, Calif: Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persica, 1992).

guide and be educational. Again this is different from the excessive focus on empirical history in the late colonial era, in which history was a methodological debate over what constitutes history and a debate over the events of Parsi history. With independence there came a shift in historiographical conventions that legitimised and restored historical sensibilities that were submerged by colonial rule. Again, this is not to suggest that this sensibility vanished during Muslim or British rule; it existed throughout the colonial period but was not considered historical by Indian elites. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is didactic history and the echo of this sensibility can be seen in *The Parsees*, it had completely faded by the time of *The Early History*, but it is now restored with *Parsi Zoroastrians*.

The question of what Indian historical consciousness was prior to colonisation and what it is today are contentious. As I discussed in chapter seven, the question of whether Indian's prior to colonisation were historically conscious was part of a discussion that legitimised colonisation. Also, in both the pre and postcolonial eras what constitutes an Indian sensibility could be challenged on the grounds that there is no such thing as a monolithic Indian group due to regional, ethnic, religious, and caste differences. However, I am not claiming that all Indians express a didactic historical sensibility. Rather, the fissures of Partition created a secular albeit Hindu state and this state has fostered a contemporary Indian Hindu historical sensibility.

A contemporary Indian historical sensibility could be considered mythological. From an anthropological or literary perspective myths use the past to guide the present.[730] However, as I discussed in relation to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in chapter five, this approach understands Indian historical consciousness within the history-myth dichotomy that is foundational to European historiography. This dichotomy defined an elite Hindu and Parsi historical sensibility in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. There are two problems with this dichotomy. Firstly, to suggest an account is mythical is to undermine its legitimacy as a record of events and people that existed because myth implies that the events described are fictitious. So, for instance, in an interview I conducted with a priest from the same branch as the author of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, he baulked at the suggestion that the poem and the encounter story is a myth as it implies these events did not occur.[731] Secondly, an empirical historical account can also guide.

730 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974); Nandy, "History's Forgotten Doubles"; Nandy, "Time Travel to a Possible Self"; Axelrod, "Myth and Identity in the Indian Zoroastrian Community."

731 From an interview with Dastur Mirza in Mumbai on 6/8/2013.

Rather, I am proposing that there are storytelling traditions whose primary purpose is didactic. In other words, regardless of whether the events are purported to have happened or not, the importance of the past is as an instructive guide for the present: the purpose of history is educational. The past becomes the servant of the present and the canvas on which contemporary debates are painted. Of course, this sensibility is not unique to Hindus; today and historically it is an extremely popular sensibility to the point we could say a didactic sensibility today is in fact conventional. In the case of Parzor we can take this didactic sensibility further because, in part, their heritage response has created an additional audience in the future. *Parsi Zoroastrians* is seeking to guide not only the present, but also a future audience.

This didactic sensibility can be seen in a number of contemporary historical accounts. One of the organisers of the Gujarat Day play, that I discussed in chapter twelve, stated in an interview that the primary purpose of history is to tell a story of the past that has lessons for today.[732] A didactic sensibility can also be seen in the popularity of the state run television show based on the Hindu epic the Ramayana that began in 1987.[733] For some Hindu nationalists, such as the new head of the Indian Historical Research Council, the *Ramayana* and other epics are understood as historically accurate.[734]

As we have seen, the Sugar in the Milk is a didactic story that is narrated to guide contemporary Parsis and non-Parsis in their relationship with each other. It is often narrated as part of a dialogue between a Parsi and a non-Parsi as either a standalone story or as part of a broader history to elucidate their loyalty, adaptability, contribution, and preservation of tradition.[735] Most often it is narrated to generate an affection for the community in a short amount of time and serve as a practical example of the flexibility of Zoroastrianism.[736] Another example of this form is a play that toured India in 2008 by a renowned Indian classical dancer and choreographer titled *And then they came to India*.[737] In chapter twelve I briefly discussed how this play sought to advertise the Initial Public Offering of a Parsi genetics company. The flyer states:

732 From an interview with Bhagesh Jha in Gandhinagar on 10/9/2013.

733 Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics after Television: Religious Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Indian Public* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Sujala Singh, "The Epic (on) Tube: Plumbing the Depths of History. A Paradigm for Viewing the TV Serialization of the Mahabharata," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 16, no. 1 (January 1, 1997): 77–101.

734 Romila Thapar, "History Repeats Itself," accessed August 20, 2014, http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/romila-thapar-smriti-irani-old-history-baiters-of-bjp/1/370799.html.

735 This is how I first heard the story in a Gujarati village named Dandi.

736 Dasturji Khurshid Dabu, "Rahe-Mazdyasani: Jewels from Haptan-Yasht," *Parsiana*, November 1965.

737 This is Mallika Sarabhai for the IPO of Avestagen. This was discussed briefly in the last chapter.

> Of the many different people who have migrated to India over the centuries, one group that stands out for their industriousness and maintenance of their ethnic difference is the Parsi. From before the birth of Zarathustra, this dance theatre piece traces the early Persians and their myths, the birth of Zoroastrianism, and the coming of the Parsis to India.[738]

For many Parsis I interviewed, the historical accuracy of the Sugar in the Milk was not important. They were ambivalent as to whether an ancient priest actually stirred sugar into milk presented by a Hindu king. For them the story represents their contemporary lived experience and is often deployed as an instructive guide. A common usage is to teach their young a strategy for preserving Zoroastrianism in a non-Zoroastrian environment. For instance, in India's capital there are less than a thousand Parsis, and there the story is narrated by Parsi adults to children in Saturday religious classes. In Parsi children's picture books produced by Parzor for a North American and Indian audience, the story guides young Parsis in a strategy to fulfil their mission to preserve Zoroastrianism.[739] In these contexts there is no reference to historical accuracy because the story is about guiding the present.[740]

Central to this sensibility is a multivalent use of the past for a present, and possibly future audience. That is, the meaning of the story changes depending upon context, audience, and the different historical sensibilities in which the story is expressed. The same story can offer different guidance. For instance, the Sugar in the Milk has a different meaning when it is narrated in Parsi families compared to when it is narrated to non-Parsis, which is different again when it is narrated by non-Parsis. For many Parsis in India I interviewed, the story is told to their children as a guide for how to relate to Hindus and preserve their own traditions. For Parsis outside of India, the story is a guide for their children in how to relate to the new and much larger communities whom the live amongst. For Hindus the story expresses their pride in Hindu munificence, which gave a home to Zoroastrians, and the story is often offered as a not so subtle hint to other minorities should relate to Hindus. The organiser of the aforementioned Gujarat Day said:

738 Cama and Singh, "Parsi Zoroastrians."

739 *In Search of My God.*; Moos, *My Simple Book of Zoroastrianism*; Shroff and Mehta, *Joyous Flame: The Parsi Zoroastrians*.

740 Other examples of this use of history are: Desai, *The Memory of Elephants*; Umashankar Joshi, "Dudhma Sakar," in *Ami Spandan*, ed. Pravinchandra C. Dave (Ahmedabad: Smt. Lalita Dave, 2003); Jagdish Dave, *Colloquial Gujarati: A Complete Language Course* (Oxon: Routledge, 1995).

> Every time you here the Sugar in the Milk story you get a different message, and the message changes depending on your age.[741]

Given that it is multivalent, debating its historical accuracy is to misunderstand its purpose. Kirin Narayan studied what I would call this popular historical sensibility in *Storytellers, saints, and scoundrels: folk narrative in Hindu religious teaching*.[742] In her study of an ashram she reports a discussion she had with the swami, or guru about his stories. He said:

> You should never assign a meaning to a myth because if you assign a meaning, the mind clamps onto just that one meaning. Then it's no longer active, because when a story is active it allows for new beginnings all the time. Don't give meanings to anything, it doesn't ever mean just one thing.[743]

The multivalence of the story allows it to simultaneously speak to and guide audiences in the present and the future. But the guidance and meaning will change. Also, the guidance that is offered to the future is not the same as the guidance that the future will take from the story.

There are also alternate versions of the Sugar in the Milk such as the Gold Ring in the Milk. The metaphor expresses a different relationship between Parsis and Hindus than the Sugar in the Milk. In the sugar version Parsis disappear into the milk producing a different flavour, but they are no longer distinguishable or divisible because there is no easy way to extract sugar from milk. By contrast, a gold ring can be extracted and the Parsis could leave India. The Parsis contribution is not a sweetening of India but their wealth. Few Parsis I interviewed knew this version and even fewer Hindus. On the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia's website this version is reproduced as:

> The Arab Muslims began to persecute the Zoroastrians and when religious intolerance reached a head, a few pious Zoroastrians left their beloved motherland of Iran and set sail for the hospitable Indian shores to preserve their identity, religion and culture. Ever since the community has contributed to the development and growth of the nation, spreading richness and lustre just the way the leader of the Parsis who came from Iran had promised the

741 From an interview with Bhagesh Jha in Gandhinagar on 10/9/2013.
742 Narayan, *Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels*.
743 Narayan, 106.

> local Indian chieftan, Jadi Rana, by dropping a gold ring in a bowl of milk symbolically placed before them.[744]

In an interview I conducted the author stated that the "gold ring is more reflective" of the relationship between Parsis and India. He said:

> we didn't really assimilate because we have kept our identity but the gold ring enriches India[745]

as Parsis have done.

The implication of multivalence for historical consciousness is that the story offers us a window into the time of its production rather than the events it narrates. Whereas a history such as *The Early History* allows us to see in the past, a multivalent history allows us to understand the present. The story's multivalence creates an allegorical representation of the present in the past. In other words, stories set in the past are narrated to offer guidance to a contemporary, or possibly a future problem, and offer a reflection on that contemporary sensibility.

Thus, the conventions that mark a work as historical in India have broadened to include openly didactic accounts in which empiricism is not central. In this sensibility the past is refashioned in the image of the present, or the present is projected onto the past for a contemporary purpose. Because the story is multivalent the guidance offered varies as does the audiences temporal location. However, as I will now show, this didactic focus on the present takes a particular twist when combined with Parzor's heritage response to save an oral past for the future.

14.5 The subsuming of the empirical by memorable didactic history in *Parsi Zoroastrians*

At this point we can bring together these shifts to understand how *Parsi Zoroastrians* is a restoration of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* historical sensibility, yet does not eschew the empiricism of *The Early History*. The Parzor account is exemplary in expressing an awareness of the debates over the historical accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, but prefers to emphasise the story's value as a guide. In a way, Parsis' debated the historical accuracy of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* in the colonial era, and they have largely decided that it is true. Significantly, establishing what happened in the past is not as important as the realities of the present. The present has become the dominant imperative in which the past is used as a canvas to

744 Dadrawala, "The Parsees, Their History and Contribution to the Indian Society."
745 From an interview with Noshir H. Dadrawala in Mumbai on 7 June 2013.

enunciate, negotiate, and guide contemporary relationships between Parsis and other communities. Or as Cama said in an interview:

> the past is not as important as the present.

Cama expressed this subsuming of empirical history when discussing the Sugar in the Milk and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*:

> It is a story, a qesse, it does not mean the exact detail, it is a story with a purpose or meaning behind it. It is a metaphorical style, which also has an element of history.

She described the Sugar in the Milk and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* as "allegories or parables". However, this does not mean they are wholly fictitious. She emphasised this when referring to the conditions for asylum:

> There must be quite a bit of accuracy. It asked you to lay down your arms and at every fire temple there are swords and maces laid to rest when we arrived. It asked you to have weddings in the evening which is done.

Cama does not eschew empirical history as she draws upon these works.[746] Rather she seeks to combine the two as she states on the organisation's website:

> Myth and legend combine with Zoroastrian history.

Significantly for Cama, what is important about the Sugar in the Milk story is its memorability. This is because for the listener or reader the meaning develops from the metaphor; the meaning is memorable rather than the historical detail. According to Cama the story is memorable because it produces an affectionate response from the listener or reader and the use of allegory provokes a cognitive reflection to understand the deeper meaning, which moves the story from short to long term memory. In an interview she said:

> the narrative is what is important not the facts because narrative stays in memory much longer than facts.

As I will show in the next chapter, the economy of remediating for the web creates an even greater focus on memorability and a collapsing of our sense of historical distance.

Finally, it is worth reflecting on how the peculiar circumstances of the Parsis' demographic decline brings into sharp relief how a multivalent didactic story for the present can become a history for the future. As I discussed in chapter thirteen, the

746 Nanavutty, *The Parsis*; Mirza, *Outlines of Parsi History*; Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Civilization: From the Earliest Times to the Downfall of the Last Zoroastrian Empire 651 AD*.

heritage response creates an audience in the future and transforms a didactic history for the present into one for the future. This transformation is possible because the story is multivalent and can simultaneously speak to the present and future. But even though demographic decline is peculiar to the Parsis, the historical sensibility of Parzor is not because, in many respects, the Parsis are a harbinger for the rest of the world. The Parsis' demographic decline is but an extreme form of a challenge facing much of the world, how to preserve what is unique to a time and place in the whirlwind of globalisation, which is rapidly undermining traditions. Demographic decline has brought the Parsis to a place much of the rest of the world is fast approaching: a historical sensibility in which the present is represented in the past for a future audience.

15. *Parsi Zoroastrians* and the cyborg historian

Over 15 years Parzor has attempted different online strategies, with the most recent using a story-telling platform developed by Google. Each attempt has used shorter blocks of texts and relied on greater degrees of hypermediation, or the use of multiple media such as text, video, and images. *Parsi Zoroastrians*, begins with an outline of Zoroastrianism followed by accounts of the Persian empires and their achievements to the defeat and persecution that precipitated the Parsis' exodus to India. Their arrival is depicted visually in an embedded painting, text, and video. The site continues with their story in India and fusion of Iranian and Indian practices before finishing with an account of the interaction of a Zoroastrian priest named Meherji Rana at the court of the Mughal Indian Emperor Akbar.[747]

In this chapter I advance a general framework for understanding how historical consciousness is transformed when history is remediated to the web. This framework is developed using the case of Parzor's evolving web-history together with the scholarship on how we read on screens, and the web's accessibility, durability, and varying degrees of reproducibility. We read differently on screens compared to paper and this necessitates different narrative strategies on the part of the author. This is due both to the physical properties of screens and the vast accessibility of information online. With the growing familiarity with the Internet, users are developing different strategies to hold back and selectively manage the deluge of information. There is a feedback loop between website designers and users in which the task of an author or site designer is to pierce a user's information defences and grab their attention. What rises above this flood are short hypermediated narratives that are memorable.

Using this framework I make a second claim that the augmented web historian is a historically conscious cyborg, which I term a web-history-human. Our Internet connected and attached devices such as phones have turned us into cyborgs by changing the relationship between human memory and history.[748] We outsource our memory to the web as the medium renders the need to remember raw information negligible. The purpose of historical narratives is no longer to remember the collective past but it is the story itself that needs to be memorable. The implication for historical consciousness is the sense of distance to the past that came with print is now collapsing.

747 For a discussion of Akbar and Meherji Rana, see chapters three and four.
748 I am drawing upon and developing Clark's conception of the cyborg. See Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*.

I then make a third claim that the web is transforming us creating a new type augmented historian that is similar to our illiterate ancestors. The historical consciousness of the web-history-human is a type of augmented orality because it is restoring the oral-history-human's focus on memorability. However, they express a similar sensibility for different reasons. For the oral-history-human memory was necessary to preserve the story and transmit it through time due to the medium's lack of accessibility, durability, and reproducibility. By contrast, for the web-history-human memorability is a strategy to rise above the deluge of accessible information, and to cope with the fluid like reproducibility of the web.

In order to understand how the revision of *Parsi Zoroastrians* came to be produced and the historical consciousness expressed, we must bring together the augmentation of the web with the analysis of the previous three chapters. We can then see that the agent responsible for the production of *Parsi Zoroastrians* exists in the space between shifts in power with the end of colonial rule, globalisation, and demographic decline; combined with the growing acceptability of oral traditions, non-conventional genres for narrating history, and the restoration a didactic sensibility. The result is a historical sensibility in which the contemporary practices of Parsis are represented in the past in order to guide a future audience.

15.1 Authorial authority and the web

It is worthwhile beginning with a key challenge posed by the web for historians, how to establish authority to narrate history. *Parsi Zoroastrians* is hosted by Google but this does signify veracity. Google and many Internet companies are simply vehicles to transmit information from which they profit. They do not claim to authenticate the information they transmit in the same manner as a publishing house or a university press. For the audience there are no markers that this is an authoritative history as anyone can put up a website and write an account of Parsi history. The non-Parsi global audience of *Parsi Zoroastrians* will not know who Cama is, although she is well-known in the Parsi community. Authorial authority is both the challenge and the attraction of a participatory medium such as the Internet.

However, I think the lack of conventions might be explained by the newness of the web. We are at the point of mass remediation to a new medium and the process of establishing conventions. The situation today is similar to the time of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* composition when script was a new medium for history and new conventions were just

being established. Bahman sought legitimacy by invoking the markers of an earlier medium, of an oral Zoroastrian tradition for the transmission of religious knowledge. By contrast, when *The Parsees* and *The Early History* were composed there were already well-established European print history conventions.

Nevertheless, Parzor and the web-history-human need to establish authority in order for a reader to consider the story historical and accept it as a didactic guide. In part, Parzor seeks to establish legitimacy by using the markers of academia. On Parzor websites Cama's academic training is made known by the prefixing of Dr. to her name, and Western academics are invoked through a form of in-text citation. Parzor also claims legitimacy by invoking the UNESCO brand. In an interview the UNESCO liaison officer for Parzor described it as a very unusual project because normally UNESCO provides money and support to disadvantaged communities with unique cultures. Parsis are unique but are certainly not disadvantaged and as such, UNESCO does not provide any money to Parzor. Rather, Cama collects money from the Parsi community, gives it to UNESCO, who then return the money to Cama in order to make it a UNESCO project.[749] But I think these are legacy markers of the print-history-human because central to *Parsi Zoroastrians* claim to authority is telling a story that generates an affectionate response on the part of the viewer. This is similar to an oral story telling style in which authority is established with sublime narration and a gripping story. In a sense, the audience are convinced that the account is historical because the story-telling is so magnificent.

15.2 The passing of hyperlinks and the linear narrative structure of *Parsi Zoroastrians*

Linked to a shift in authorial authority is the role of hyperlinks, which are electronic links that can be utilised in web pages to allow a user to navigate to a different part of the page, another page on the same site, or another site. Scholars have argued that hyperlinks undermine the author's narrative and hence authority because readers create their own narrative as they move from link to link creating connections based upon association rather than chronology.[750] A user who clicks on a link to navigate between and within a

749 From an interview with Moe Chiba from UNESCO India in Delhi on 12 July 2013.

750 Rigney, "When the Monograph Is No Longer the Medium"; Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us*; Carolyn Guertin, "Handholding, Remixing, and the Instant Replay: New Narratives in a Postnarrative World," in *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, ed. Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013), 183–202; Annamaria Carusi, "Textual Practitioners A Comparison of Hypertext Theory and Phenomenology of Reading," *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 5, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 163–80; There is also a growing body of work on what has been termed Interactive Digital Narrative. See Hartmut Koenitz et al., *Interactive Digital Narrative: History, Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2015); For online history there are studies examining how narratives and sources are transformed, as well as guides on how to produce content online and archive digitally. See Daniel J Cohen and Roy

page doesn't necessarily consume the narrative in the order that the author intended. In a sense, the user can create their own narrative. The versions of the Parzor sites prior to *Parsi Zoroastrians* made use of these earlier web technologies in which the text on each page was navigated through a vertical scroll and hyperlinks. A screenshot of the landing page is shown in illustration sixteen in which the user is presented with many navigational choices.

Illustration 16: Shernaz Cama, *The UNESCO Parsi Zoroastrian Project*, Parzor, accessed July 5, 2017, http://unescoparzor.com/.

However, the scholarship on hyperlinks does not provide a helpful analytical framework to understand the later Google Parzor site or more recent online narratives. On the Google site hyperlinks are not employed in a manner that allow the user to break the chronological flow of the narrative by clicking or touching a link that navigates them to another site or page. Video and image content is embedded so that when a user clicks on a video it plays within the site. Consequently, the user does not create their own narrative because they are constrained within the path that the site stipulates. A user's capacity to move forward and back, and how the site appears is dependent upon the type of device they are using to view the site. When viewing the site on a desktop computer or a laptop

Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/.

with a larger screen, the user can use internal links to jump to different parts of the story using a navigation bar at the bottom of the screen that indicates the users location in the narrative. However, it is a visual clue that allows the user to see their location relative to the start and the end that is similar to a scroll rather the content of that pane or section as is the case with a chapter title. By contrast, on a small screen, such as a phone, the user can only move back and forth sequentially along the timeline. Restricting the capacity of a user to create their own narrative is common in more recent online media. For instance, in a narrative delivered using video on YouTube a user can only go forward or back. Recent sites such as *Parsi Zoroastrians* make use of code that runs in the user's browser creating a different navigational experience to hyperlinks, which I will explain shortly. As a result, Parzor's Google version is a particularly good case study.

Through the use of Google's tools, *Parsi Zoroastrians* produces a fixed narrative path whose navigation is similar to a precodex scroll as the site does not have separate pages. On the large screen version of the site, the user navigates along a horizontal scroll that flows from left to right with a series of panes or columns. Each pane encapsulates either a short block of text, an image, or video, and these panes float in the foreground on top of a static background picture of the inside of a fire temple. As the user scrolls forward along the narrative to the right or backwards to the left, the background picture of a fire temple remains the same, and in the foreground floating panes display their content. A sense of how this scroll appears on entering the site is captured in illustration seventeen with the opening pane including the title and the following pane an image of Zarathustra. How the site scrolls to the following pane is shown in illustration eighteen.

Illustration 17: Shernaz Cama and Vanshika Singh, *Parsi Zoroastrians: first and second panes*, screenshot, Google Arts & Culture, accessed 5 July 2017, https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/parsi-zoroastrians-from-persia-to-akbar-s-court/gQXXqzxD?hl=en-GB.

Illustration 18: Shernaz Cama and Vanshika Singh, *Parsi Zoroastrians: second and third panes*, screenshot, Google Arts & Culture, accessed 5 July 2017, https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/parsi-zoroastrians-from-persia-to-akbar-s-court/gQXXqzxD?hl=en-GB.

How a user navigates the site and how it appears is dependent upon the type of device on which it is viewed. On a device with a touch screen the user navigates by swiping from right to left, and in the case of a mouse, touchpad, or pointer, the user clicks on the right or left-hand side of the page to move forward or back. The number of panes that can be seen at any one time is also dependent upon the physical size of the screen. With a small screen such as a phone one pane can be seen, on a larger device such as a tablet or laptop two panes are visible, and on a large monitor up to four can be viewed at a time.

The appearance of the site and capacity to navigate are the result of design choices by the developers. In the case of *Parsi Zoroastrians*, the site is dynamically created by an interaction between code running in the user's browser and servers. Code is executed in the browser that then builds the structure of the site as a horizontal scroll with a background.[751] The content of the first page and all the text is transmitted in the initial interaction between the user's browser and the web server, but the images and videos for the subsequent panes are not. As the user scrolls to the right, code running in the user's browser fetches subsequent images and videos from Google's servers, and then assembles the content into the hypermediated scroll the user views. As I will argue in the final chapter, this dynamic reproduction has implications for the durability of a narrative and historical sources.

Significantly for the comparison with previous revisions of the story, the fixed linear narrative structure of *Parsi Zoroastrians* is ordered firstly by chronology and secondly by theme. Overall it is chronological moving forward through time, but themes within the chronology are used to reflect upon contemporary Parsi practices. For instance, the site begins in the third millennium with Zarathustra and stories from his era, before turning to the founder of the first great Zoroastrian imperial dynasty. One of the kings of this dynasty named Darius is introduced and then used as a segue into explaining the Persian new year, which was introduced during his reign and is celebrated by Parsis today. The narrative structure of *Parsi Zoroastrians* is different from the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* because of the addition of a thematic structure, even though they both chronologically cover the same period. Pointedly, neither contain the chapters that characterised the thematic organisation of *The Parsees* and *The Early History*.

751 The code running in the browser is JavaScript.

15.3 Hypermediacy and augmented orality

We can understand the media strategies of *Parsi Zoroastrians* using the theory of remediation. Bolter and Grusin argue that digital media seek to create a sense of immediacy with the media they remediate through a strategy of hypermediacy, or the use of multiple media. This is a somewhat paradoxical strategy because hypermediation seeks to erase a user's sense of mediation and create an unmediated experience.[752] In the case of *Parsi Zoroastrians*, hypermediation seeks to create an unmediated experience with how the story is narrated orally by a Parsi. In an interview Cama confirmed that she tried to reproduce the Sugar in the Milk story online as it is narrated orally. The version of the Sugar in the Milk on *Parsi Zoroastrians* is hypermediated using text, image, and video; it is shown in illustration twenty and twenty-one. The textual component combines an oral account with the manuscript *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and is prefaced with an explanation, which contextualises the story. The image is scanned from a Parsi children's book published in 1978, and the video shows Parsis' singing a popular Gujarati song that recounts their arrival in India.[753]

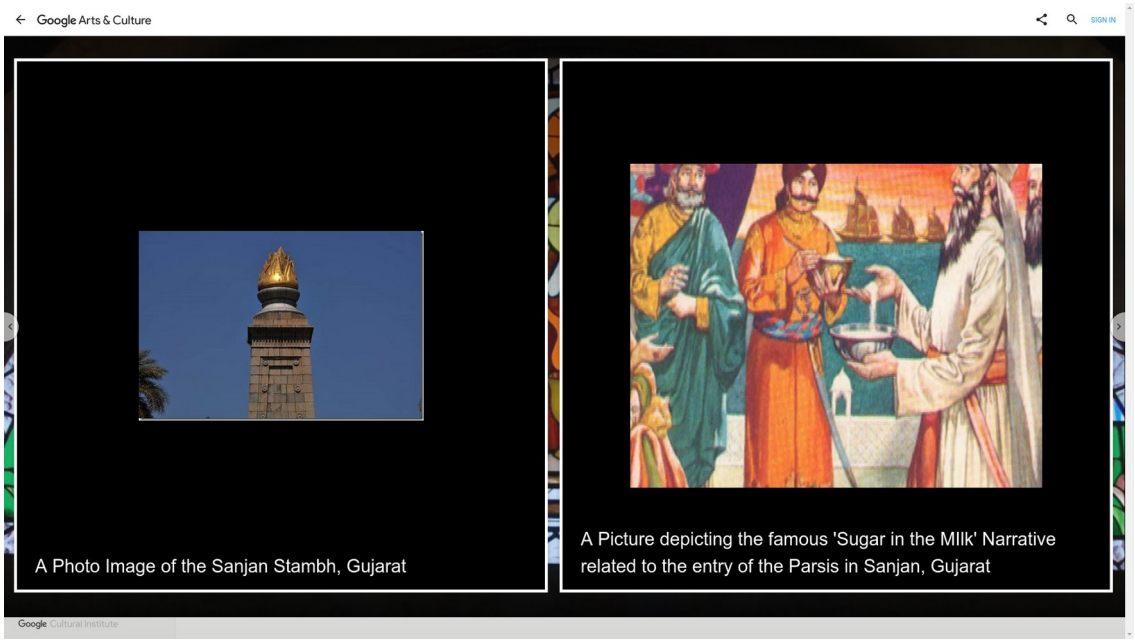

Illustration 19: Shernaz Cama and Vanshika Singh, *Parsi Zoroastrians: Sanjan Stambh and Sugar in the Milk*, screenshot, Google Arts & Culture, accessed 5 July 2017, https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/parsi-zoroastrians-from-persia-to-akbar-s-court/gQXXqzxD?hl=en-GB.

752 Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation Understanding New Media*, 17; Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

753 *In Search of My God.*

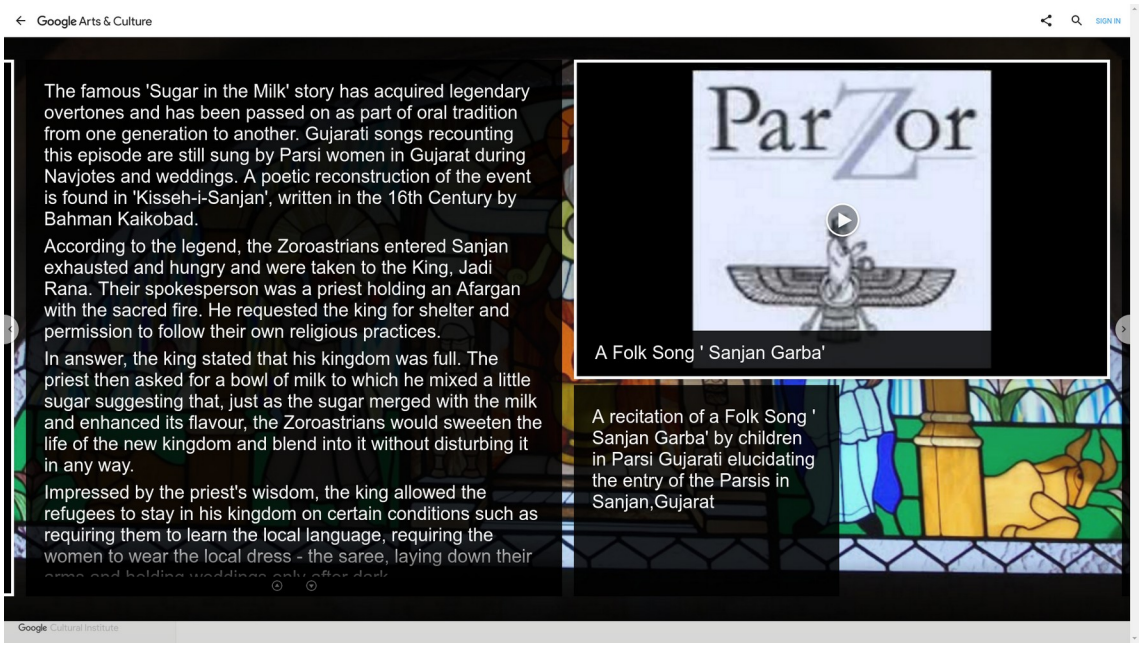

Illustration 20: Shernaz Cama and Vanshika Singh, *Parsi Zoroastrians: Sugar in the Milk*, screenshot, Google Arts & Culture, accessed 5 July 2017, https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/parsi-zoroastrians-from-persia-to-akbar-s-court/gQXXqzxD?hl=en-GB.

I also adapt the restoration argument of Walter Ong to postulate that the web is creating a type of augmented orality. Ong argues that electronic media such as television are a form of secondary orality, which restores the primary orality that existed prior to literacy.[754] My argument is a modification of Ong's: with remediation to the web a historical sensibility is being restored that existed at the first point of remediation from orality to writing. In other words, the sensibility of *Parsi Zoroastrians* is similar to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* because both are at the initial moments of remediation to a new medium. Nonetheless, as time progresses we are moving towards a type of augmented orality because our web era historical thinking is becoming more and more similar to an oral sensibility that existed prior to written history. This oral type of historical thinking comes about, in part, because we augment our memory with the web due to screen reading and the deluge of information.

15.4 Screen reading and shorter narratives

The web's restoration of an oral historical sensibility is partly due to the economy of reading on screens, which is conducive to shorter narratives. The economy is created due to a circular relationship between how a user consumes a website and how they are built by web designers. There is a feedback loop to find the most fitting narrative form for the

754 Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*.

economy of the web. This is an evolutionary process in which we create the media's form and the media recreates us; it is both a process of exploration involving trial and error whilst simultaneously being an exploitation of the reader's attention. For print this relationship produced the novel and long texts, whereas screen reading produces shorter hypermediated episodic accounts that seek to create a sense of immediacy with oral story-telling.

From 1999 to 2013 Parzor has produced five different sites and in these we can see a micro-history of the web's evolution. Each site represents an attempt to remediate for the economy of the web. Archival snapshots and interviews with Parzor project members involved in the creation of the sites illustrate how their online presence has evolved towards shorter blocks of text and greater hypermediation.[755] The first Parzor site was hosted by a ubiquitous free hosting platform of the 1990s called GeoCities. The site followed the conventions of the time; it was a home page that announced their presence online providing information about the project to a global audience. The content was copied and pasted from the initial project proposal document creating long pages with a large amount of text. It was a static website insofar as everyone saw the same site and the only user interaction was navigation. The second version was a complete rebuild by a web design company who registered and hosted a domain name unescoparzor.com. Again it was a static site in which text was copied and pasted from documents that were designed for print. The third version was built using a popular open source Content Management System called Joomla and this is the first version in which content was created for the web. The long documents that characterised the previous two versions were replaced with shorter text broken up into separate pages. According to interviews I conducted, this was a response to feedback from visitors submitted via a guest book page who wrote that while the project was interesting, the text was too long. *Parsi Zoroastrians*, the most recent version by Google, has the shortest blocks of text and a greater reliance on hypermediation.[756]

The site's evolution is partly due to the physical properties of screens, which create a different type of reading experience compared to a printed book. Each type of screen, from a desktop computer to a laptop, tablet, phone, or e-ink reader differ from print in their degree of comfort for reading. There is scale of discomfort from a phone which is

755 Interviews with Shernaz Cama, Kersi Shroff who built the first site and Nasha Mehta who helped with the second site, and Alankar who designed the third and fourth sites, and Moe Chiba from UNESCO.

756 Some of the evolution of the sites can be seen on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine. See "Internet Archive Wayback Machine," accessed February 9, 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.unescoparzor.com.

the greatest to an e-ink reader which is the least. They are all less comfortable on the eyes than a printed book and are all by degrees physically cumbersome. The act of sitting in a comfortable chair and engaging in a session of reading on a screen is unpleasant relative to a printed book.[757]

The condensing of screens goes hand in hand with the condensing of narratives. A developer must design their site so that it can be viewed on a variety of different screens from a small phone to a large desktop screen. Whereas earlier versions of the Parzor site were designed for large desktop screens, *Parsi Zoroastrians* is designed for mobile phones first, and then for other types and sizes of screens. Mobile first is now standard industry practice. The economy of mobile phones favours shorter blocks of text, images, or video, which can be consumed on a small space and in a short time. Reading a substantial amount of text on a screen smaller than six inches strains the reader's eyes. Simply put, small screens favour brevity. We can see this be comparing the earlier screenshots of the desktop site with the mobile version, which is shown in illustration twenty-one.

The evolution to shorter text can be understood by examining the relationship between website design and usability studies. Today the key principles of software and website design are embedded in much of industry's work. One of the leading usability consultants who developed these principles is Jacok Nielson. He studied how users read web pages and termed it the F pattern. He tracked the eye movements of 232 users and found that they scanned the page in an F shaped movement. They first read horizontally across the top of a page, followed by a second horizontal movement in the middle of the page, and finally a vertical movement down the left column.[758] Designers work with usability experts and bring their own experience of reading on screens together with the feedback of users to produce web sites that cater to screen reading.

757 Ellen Rose, "The Phenomenology of On-Screen Reading: University Students' Lived Experience of Digitised Text," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 42, no. 3 (May 1, 2011): 523.

758 Jakob Nielsen, "F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content," Nielsen Norman Group, accessed January 15, 2016, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/f-shaped-pattern-reading-web-content/.

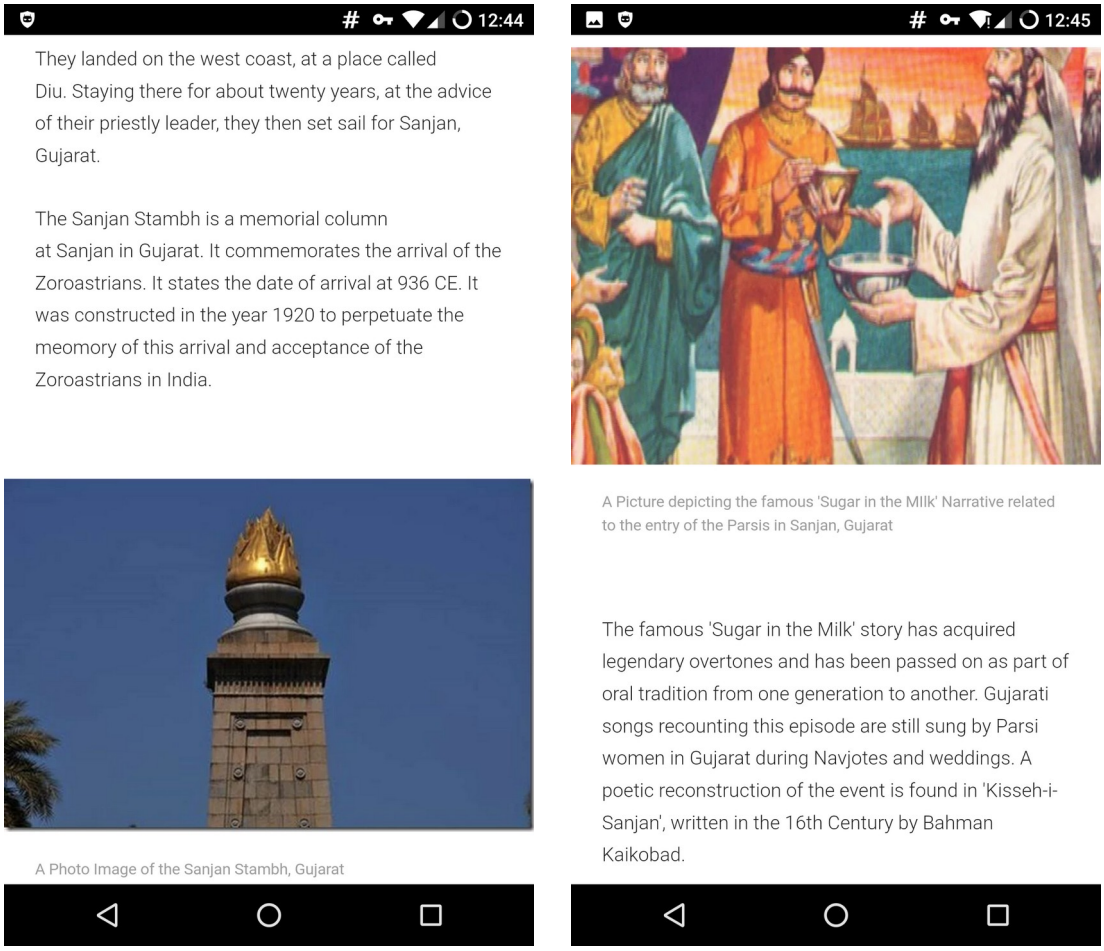

Illustration 21: Shernaz Cama and Vanshika Singh, *Parsi Zoroastrians: Sugar in the Milk mobile version*, screenshot, Google Arts & Culture, accessed December 4, 2015. https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/parsi-zoroastrians-from-persia-to-akbar-s-court/gQXXqzxD?hl=en-GB.

Another way of understanding this shift to shorter narratives is by drawing and building upon the scholarship on screen reading.[759] Screen reading has been termed as hyperreading and differs from print-reading in nine respects:

1. filtering, or more selective reading
2. skimming over the text and reading less
3. pecking, or less linear reading
4. imposing, or that meaning is derived from the reader's intention rather than from within the text

759 Christian Vandendorpe, "Reading on Screen: The New Media Sphere," in *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, ed. Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013), 183–202; Lucas D. Introna and Fernando M. Ilharco, "On the Meaning of Screens: Towards a Phenomenological Account of Screenness," *Human Studies* 29, no. 1 (April 15, 2006): 57–76.

5. filming, or that meaning is derived non-textual elements
6. trespassing, or less defined textual boundaries
7. de-authorising, or that authorship and authorial intention are less important
8. fragmenting, which is the breaking up of longer texts such as essays, articles, and books
9. juxtaposing, or having multiple windows or tabs open and reading across a number of texts and topics.[760]

The implication of hyperreading is the condensing of historical narratives and hypermediation. There is little point in producing vast quantities of text if all that will be read is the first few sentences and the rest will be skimmed, pecked, searched, and scanned. Unlike the author of a print work, for the producer of a website the most successful strategy for the medium is to hypermediate and condense the quantity of text.[761]

15.5 The cyborg and oral memorability

In order to understand how screen reading, hypermediacy, and the condensing of text transforms historical consciousness, we must first examine how the web's high degree of accessibility augments our memories. It is the confluence of these factors that create the web's particular narrative economy in which there is a focus on telling memorable stories. Significantly, a focus on memorability is similar to orality, albeit for very different reasons, which makes the web a type of augmented orality.

The accessibility of information in our era is unparalleled due to the Internet.[762] Indeed, it has been argued that "we are living in the age of a second flood, a flood of communication."[763] We navigate this deluge by skimming texts searching for keywords similar to a digital search. Rather than reading one long text or multiple texts our strategy is to jump from one spot to another in a highly selective form of reading. Whereas print

760 This list is a combination of eights differences that Sosnoski identifies and juxtaposition from Hayles. See James Sosnoski, "Hyper-Readers and Their Reading Engines," in *Passions, Pedagogies, and 21st Century Technologies*, ed. Gail E Hawisher, Cynthia L Selfe, and National Council of Teachers of English (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1999), 162–63; Hayles, *How We Think*, 61.

761 Furthermore, this economy for screen is transforming other media as the theory of remediation suggests; there is a feedback loop. Print story-telling is becoming more like the web.

762 For instance Google has digitised 30 million books. See Robert Darnton, "Google and the Future of Books," *New York Review of Books* 56, no. 2 (February 12, 2009), http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22281; Tim Wu, "What Ever Happened to Google Books?," The New Yorker, November 11, 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/what-ever-happened-to-google-books; Robert Hassan, *The Age of Distraction: Reading, Writing, and Politics in a High-Speed Networked Economy* (New Brunswick (U.S.A.); London (U.K.): Transaction Publishers, 2012).

763 Gervais, "Is There a Text on This Screen?"

has content and index pages, the digital and the web have the capacity to search by keywords to find relevant information. Our reading comes to mimic a computational search; we scan for keywords, we scan with digitised search, and we scan with our eyes. This is an efficient strategy to hold back information and reduce the clutter.[764] But it also necessitates certain strategies for grabbing attention on the part of designers, which is not such a necessity for other media because they do not have competition within the same medium. For instance, we generally read one book at a time or hear one story at a time, yet with the web and screens, we are scanning multiple sites and pages at the same time.

Accessibility and screen reading is leading to a cognitive shift from what can be characterised as deep-attention to hyper-attention. Katherine Hayles argues deep-attention is linked to book reading culture and involves concentration on one idea for a significant amount of time. By contrast, with hyper-attention we rapidly switch focus between different information streams.[765] For Hayles, screen reading is creating a generational divide between digital natives, or those growing up with the Internet, and those from the print era. She argues digital natives exhibit Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder-like symptoms due to the neuroplasticity of our brains, which are adapting and being rewired for our media rich environments. Our brains are becoming wired for hyper-attention rather than deep-attention; or put another way, the web is rewiring our brains at a neural level.[766] According to Nicholas Carr hyperlinks are degrading comprehension because we jump from one text to another and are constantly evaluating links. As a result information is never transferred from short into our long term memory, which is a requirement for deeper reflection.[767] He argues that "the Net may well be the single most powerful mind-altering technology that has ever come into general use."[768] While Carr mourns the effects of new media, I agree with Hayles' position that hyperreading is a suitable strategy for our media rich environments.[769] It is salutary to note that print and television were both derided and Socrates argued that writing destroys memory.[770]

However, my argument is dependent upon a weaker claim than either Carr's of Hayles': contemporary humans are becoming historically conscious cyborgs because we augment our memory with the web.[771] Whether we are being rewired at a neural level or

764 Rose, "The Phenomenology of On-Screen Reading," 523.
765 Hayles, "Hyper and Deep Attention," 187.
766 Hayles, "Hyper and Deep Attention."
767 Carr, *The Shallows*, 126–29.
768 Carr, 116.
769 Hayles, "Hyper and Deep Attention," 195.
770 Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*, 78–79.
771 This builds upon Clark's argument that we are already cyborgs. See Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*.

simply adapting our cognitive strategies is not as important as how the accessibility of information storage via our attached devices, together with the demands (and limits) on attention, is changing our relationship with our own memory. We are cyborgs because we augment our our memory's to the web via permanently Internet connected devices such as phones and tablets.

The web's accessibility means we no longer need to remember raw information. One well-known psychology study argues that we remember less information if we know it is accessible online and instead we remember how to find this information.[772] So now there is less memory of facts, but whereas earlier there were mnemonic strategies for facts and narratives, such strategies are now being used for remembering where to find information and how to manage attention.

I propose that the implication for history telling online is that we remember a story's meaning rather than the supporting evidence, and this favours a historical story like the Sugar in the Milk. The accessibility of facts makes them subsidiary because we only need to remember how to find them. The flood of information is full of facts, what stands out in this flood is a short story that produces an affectionate response. Whereas a good book uses a hook to entice the reader into the detail, with the web there is only a hook. We can see this clearly with the Sugar in the Milk version of the Parsi story. When it is told orally or on the web, the listener or reader do not need to know the details of what has happened to the Parsis, they only need to remember a short story and its meaning.

For web history and the Sugar in the Milk, hypermediation and allegory are two evolving strategies to counter hyperattention and move the meaning of a story from short to long term memory. The first is hypermediation in which the same story is repeated using different media in order to engage different modes of cognition and make the story more memorable. Hypermediation increases the likelihood that the story will pierce the reader's information defences and reach their attention. This is because few users will look at all the media on a page, some will read the text, others will view the video, and some will look at the pictures. But if the narrator creates a competition between different media relating the same story on the same page, then within the economy of the web, the likelihood that the story will get through to the reader is increased. We can see this clearly on *Parsi Zoroastrians*. The second strategy is the use of allegory, which allows a narrator to

772 Betsy Sparrow, Jenny Liu, and Daniel M. Wegner, "Google Effects on Memory: Cognitive Consequences of Having Information at Our Fingertips," *Science* 333, no. 6043 (August 5, 2011): 776–78.

impart complexity in as few words as possible. Again, this is an evolutionary strategy to circumvent a user's information defences.

Although it is counterintuitive, the web-history-human and the oral-history-human have a similar focus on memorability even though they are opposite extremes in terms of how much information can be recorded and transmitted. There is a scale in the quantity of information that can be recorded and transmitted with orality occupying the bottom end, followed by manuscript, print, and finally the web at the top. Orality has the least capacity because it is reliant on human memory and this information is also the most vulnerable to loss as it is tied to the frailty of an individual's existence. Oral traditions employ mnemonic strategies to remember because what is once forgotten can never be re-remembered. For the same reasons manuscript can record a greater amount of information with less needing to be remembered by individual readers. Print can record even greater amounts of information with even less needing to be actively remembered. In this way with each medium we have progressively outsourced our memory by greater degrees and less memory work has been required. We can then see that the oral-history-human and the web-history-human employ strategies to remember, but for very different reasons. It is this similar focus on memorability that makes the web a form of augmented orality.

15.6 Augmented orality and a close past

So what are the implications for historical consciousness of the web's economy that produces shorter and more memorable narratives? How does this economy change our relationship to the past compared to the earlier forms of historical consciousness studied in this dissertation? I argue that it condenses our sense of distance to the past, which is critical for the allegorical representation of history they seek to create. The print-history-human allows the representation of the past in the past, which is different with the web-history-human and the oral-history-human in which the present is represented in the past. As I discussed in previous chapters, a sense of distance is one of the key innovations of European print historiography.

At this point it will be helpful to compare the sense of distance created by the media studied in this thesis. For *The Early History*, a long printed book full of evidence builds a complex account of what was happening at the time in order to transport the reader to that time. A detailed account of the Parsi experience in Iran and early India gives the reader a sense of what it was like to be a Zoroastrian in that era. By contrast, online, manuscript, and oral accounts do not enable one to perceive how different the past is

from today because of their short length and comparative lack of detail. *Parsi Zoroastrians* does not transport the user more than a thousand years back in time to the shores of Gujarat or 3600 years back to the time of Zarathustra. The shortage of detail means that a user cannot engage in the imaginative process of picturing and empathising with the Parsis' flight from persecution, arrival in India, and the challenges of negotiating Indian and Iranian traditions. The following table contrasts the different length in words and years covered by the narrative of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, *The Parsees*, *The Early History* and *Parsi Zoroastrians*.

	Qesse-ye Sanjan	***The Parsees***	***The Early History***	***Parsi Zoroastrians***
Number of words	5494	72251	74934	3730[773]
Years covered	~3000	~3200	~1200	~3000
Words per year	~2	~23	~62	~1

I should place a caveat on this analysis as there are clearly writers whose expression transports us into another world and time in the space of a few pages. The most sublime authors of short stories attest to this. I am not suggesting the ratio of words relative to the time period narrated is an absolute measure of distance. Rather, at a general level there is a different sense of immersion when reading a five hundred page book compared to one that is only a few pages. The speed at which we read online and the brevity of the text means we sample, rather than being transported back in time. *Parsi Zoroastrians* and the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* provide the viewer or reader with a three millennia sampler.

A collapsing of our sense of distance to the past is also due to the web's reproducibility. Historical narratives and sources are accessible on a scale that dwarfs print and is inconceivable for orality, but the web is not fixed. Everyone that views the Parzor site at a moment in time consumes the same narrative, however that narrative is subject to change. If Google or Cama decide to modify the site then all subsequent users will consume a different story. Of even greater consequence is a decision by Google to no longer fund their cultural institute or Cama deciding to delete the site. In the final chapter I explore what happened to the first Parzor site with the demise of GeoCities.

The reproducibility of the web is quite different to print because websites are constantly remade. Over the course of writing this dissertation Google has modified the

773 I am also counting explanatory textual blurbs attached to images and video.

code that publishes *Parsi Zoroastrians* and Cama has slightly modified the content. As a result the site always looks contemporary regardless of whether Cama has changed the content. It is important to note that the earlier versions are lost to all but the developers and users who saw those earlier iterations.[774] The earlier versions are like an oral account existing only in human memory. Most websites are constantly updated and always speak to the present, thus never becoming historical in the same manner as a printed book. A print history written decades ago appears old because language and formatting change. A book can have editions but the earlier editions continue to exist even when they are superseded. We can always check which edition of a book we have but this is not the case for a website which is often updated silently. The content and form of a website is constantly reproduced and is fluid relative to the fixity of print.

Nevertheless, the reproducibility of a website varies from either a high degree similar to print down to a lower degree similar to orality. That is, when a person consumes a web based narrative it could be identical to one consumed by others or it could be different. For example, a website can be both stable and unchanging over many years because it has not been updated or the site can be quite different because the site tailors the content for that user. The geographic location of a user can also affect the content they consume because the site might tailor the content by the viewer's region.[775] The content of a site will not be reproducible if the site seeks to tailor the content for the user based upon an algorithm for determining what the user wants to see. Even the same user looking at the same site could see different content and form after the page is refreshed. It is important to note that this sort of site is far more impermanent than an oral story narrated by one person to a group in which case everyone in the group hears the same version even if they remember it slightly differently. However, if the site is designed to produce the same content for every user it is highly reproducible. All of this means there is not a canonical version of a website as there is with print.

A web based narrative immerses us in a shared present rather than immersing us in a distant past because of a collapsing of a sense of distance to the past. The hypermediated collage of *Parsi Zoroastrians* produces a sense of immediacy that transports the non-Parsi audience not into the past, but into the contemporary Parsi world. The site is a representation of the present in the past rather than an attempt to read events in their time. The Parsi story becomes more than the heritage of one community, it is presented as part of a shared cosmopolitan fabric that is one of many guides for the contemporary

774 That is, unless they have been remediated to script or print.
775 A user's region is determined by their Internet Protocol (IP) address.

world. We can see this as a new kind of kinship in which history moves beyond being a tool to create distinct units of humans to being a shared guide.

Fundamental for the argument of my thesis is that short allegorical narratives focused on memorability seek to represent the present in the past. As I discussed in relation to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and the oral tradition that Bahman remediated, there is a temporal focus on the present. By contrast print history seeks to represent the past in the past. Combined together with my argument form the previous chapter that a heritage sensibility creates an audience in the future, it can then be said that the historical sensibility of *Parsi Zoroastrians* is similar to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* because both are historical narrative about the present for the future. We can then say that the augmented orality of the web-history-human shares similarities with both the script-history-human and the oral-history-human.

16. Historiographical agency and the restoration

In this the penultimate chapter I conclude my reply to the question that has driven this thesis: How can we understand the production of historical revisions, distinct forms of historical consciousness, and the similarities between these different forms? In order to answer this question I have examined four exemplary revisions of the Parsi story and used them as windows into the historical thinking of their respective eras. To understand how revisions are produced I have advanced a theory of historiographical agency, which builds upon a theory of material agency, or that agency is not a property of humans but exists in the space between us and technology. As a result we can view individual Parsis and the community together with ideas, technology, and the story as units within the same analytical frame. We can then recognise that historical revisions and new forms of historical consciousness are produced by an augmented historian who inhabits the space between the author, shifts in the source and narrative media, historiographical conventions, and power that existing histories could not explain.

In order to compare the different forms of historical consciousness I have developed a comparative method, and in my reflection on these forms I have proposed that the historical sensibility of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is largely restored with *Parsi Zoroastrians*. We can see this by comparing how aspects that are universal to all four revisions use history to represent different relationships between the past, present, and future. In this chapter I begin by summarising the theory of historiographical agency before discussing how the metaphor of the Gutenberg Parenthesis helps us understand this restoration.

16.1 Historiographical agency and the action to revise each history

In order to synthesise how historical revisions are produced, I will briefly detail the three part process to create differently augmented historians. Firstly, historical revisions are a response to a perceived contingency, to a tectonic shift in the power relationship between Parsis and other communities that existing versions could not explain. The first revision, the 1599 *Qesse-ye Sanjan,* sought to historically explain the Parsis' place in the new post-Islamic world of the Mughal emperor Akbar. However, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* could not explain colonial rule and the Parsis' alliance with the British, which provoked the story's second revision in 1858 with *The Parsees*. This revision could not explain the looming end of colonial rule provoking another revision in 1911 titled *The Early History*. In turn this

revision could not explain decolonisation and globalisation which provoked the final revision, *Parsi Zoroastrians*.

Secondly, each revision is a response to a shift in historiographical conventions that developed as a result of the aforementioned transformations in power relationships. In order for the story to be considered historical it was revised using new conventions that marked a work as historical. As such, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a revision of the story using the developing Indo-Persian conventions of Akbar's court. *The Parsees* is a revision of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* using the conventions of a nineteenth century European style national narrative. *The Early History* revises earlier versions as the conventions became increasingly empirical. Finally, *Parsi Zoroastrians* has been published in a milieu in which non-conventional genres for knowing and narrating the history have become increasingly acceptable. The revision combines the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* with colonial and postcolonial histories together with the allegorical Sugar in the Milk story.

Thirdly, each revision is a remediation of the story to a new narrative medium and is sourced from different new media. Media augments our capacity to transmit the past through time to the future. I have proposed that we can understand the historical sensibility created by different media by examining three facets: accessibility, durability, and reproducibility. These three aspects are realised to different degrees in orality, manuscript, print, and on the web. In the case of the revisions studied, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a manuscript sourced from an oral story, *The Parsees* is the first print revision of the story sourced from a manuscript, *The Early History* is a print revision from print and manuscript sources, and *Parsi Zoroastrians* is remediated to the web combining text, images, and video from oral and print sources.

In the space between these three shifts we differently augmented historians. All historians are augmented historians because we can only know the past and represent it narratively with the help of power, conventions, and media. We can then recognise that revisions and distinct forms of historical consciousness are produced by different types of media-history-knowing-humans, or media augmented humans. The oral-history-human is different from the script-history-human, which is in turn different from the print-history-human, and in turn different from the web-history-human. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is then produced by script-history-bahman, *The Parsees* by print-history-karaka, *The Early History* by

print-history-paymaster, and *Parsi Zoroastrians* by web-history-cama.[776] These augmented historians are then the vehicles for history to be revised and move through time.

16.2 The Gutenberg Parenthesis and the restoration

As I examined the four revisions it became apparent that the historical thinking expressed by *Parsi Zoroastrians* was remarkably similar to the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. In the Gutenberg Parenthesis formulation I found a helpful metaphor to understand the similarities between the first and the last revision, whilst also recognising the legacies of the second and third. In this formulation the relationship between different modes of cognition can be expressed metaphorically by a sentence containing a parentheses. If we imagine the process of reading a sentence, the opening parenthesis takes us on a detour that ends with the closing of the parenthesis and the continuation of the sentence's previous trajectory. We do not forget what was read in the parenthesis, rather it is a detour from which we have returned. The parenthesis is a helpful way of thinking about the revisions studied because the historical thinking of *The Parsees* and *The Early History* are legacies that have not been forgotten, even though *Parsi Zoroastrians* has restored the historical sensibility of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*. These are historiographical memories because the print-history-human came to know the past and represent it narratively in ways that cannot be forgotten. Thus, the revisions can be represented parenthetically as:

The Qesse-ye Sanjan { *The Parsees* { *The Early History* } } *Parsi Zoroastrians*

If we understand these revisions as a window into the historical thinking of the time and the product of differently augmented humans, we can then see a parenthetical relationship between the historiographical agents:

oral-history-human { script-history-human { print-history-human } } web-history-human

16.3 A comparison of the revisions' different forms of historical consciousness

My formulation of the parenthesis is supported by a comparison of narrative and historiographical categories that are universal to the four revisions. The narrative categories are: the narrative medium, language, form, length, structure, and subject. The historiographical categories are: the source media, how events and people are located in time, audience, the temporal allegorical representation, sense of distance to the past,

776 I have deliberately written these names of these augmented historians in lower case to de-emphasise the author and refocus on this hybrid agent.

change over time, focus, purpose of history, historical structure, and authorial authority. We can further abstract these categories into a formulation for different configurations of representation and audience so that each revision is a relationship between past, present, and future. In order to understand how these formulations have been developed, and so that we can recognise the restoration, I will bring together the analysis of chapters four to fifteen into a succinct summary of each revision.

The historical manuscript sensibility expressed in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* can be summarised as a representation of the present in the past for the future. Expanding upon this formulation we can say that the poem allegorically represents contemporary Parsi life in the remembered past. This is because the purpose of history was to tell a didactic story to guide a future Parsi priestly audience in a successful strategy for preserving Zoroastrianism by negotiating meeting points with Hindus and separateness from Muslims. A historical story in which the subject is a Zoroastrian king was a status claim for the author's branch of the priesthood. The poem establishes the author's authority to narrate the past by using Persian language, a cyclical three part Zoroastrian historical structure, and by invoking the priestly Zoroastrian tradition for the transmission of religious knowledge.

The *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* temporal relationship is a result of the augmentation of memory that came with the remediation of an oral story to script. In the poem we can see the echo of an earlier oral historical sensibility because it is the first remediation to script, and as result the medium seeks to create a sense of immediacy with an oral history telling style. For orality there are strategies such as a poetic form, chronological narrative structure, and a short length that make the story a memorable vehicle to transmit the remembered past through time. The focus on memorability is due to the medium's lack of durability and reproducibility. Because of the focus on a memorable, short, and didactic story, dates are unimportant as is the locating of events and people in time, hence there is no sense of distance to the past. The augmentation of Parsi memory with script created the possibility of addressing a future audience because script is more durable, reproducible, and accessible than orality. The combination of an oral echo augmented with script created a heritage sensibility that simultaneously viewed the past as frail, yet created an audience in the future. Consequently, it was a representation of the present in the remembered past because an oral story constantly changes in the service of the present, hence the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* provides a snapshot of Parsi life in 1599.

By contrast we can summarise *The Parsees* as a book representation of the past in the past for the present. Significantly, the past that is represented is the vision presented in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* because *The Parsees* is a printed book that creates a sense of immediacy with its key manuscript source. Given that the poem represents Parsi life as it was in 1599, the book also represents this same vision. Yet for the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* 1599 was the present whereas in the case of *The Parsees* it is in the past. We can then say that *The Parsees* transports the reader into Parsi life as it was in 1599 and represents it as the general past. Critically different to the poem is the transformation in the audience due to the augmentation of memory with print. The purpose of a historical story was no longer a vehicle to remember the past because the past was no longer precarious due to the accessibility, reproducibility, and durability of print. This meant the focus on memorability shifted to factuality, and the purpose of history became a project to know and inquire into the past. *The Parsees* could dispense with the short length of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* because the story no longer needed to be remembered due to the augmentation of print. As a result a longer story could be told, which combined with locating events in universal time, created a greater sense of distance to the past. As the story was no longer a vehicle for the remembered past, a chronological narrative gave way to a thematic one in order to establish a causal argument about historical change. Due to print's augmentation there was a shift in audience to the present because the past was no longer precarious. The contemporary audience were the British and anglicised Parsis, which meant that British historiographical conventions were used, authorial authority was established by corroborating the opinions of Europeans, and the language was English. In order to support British rule the historical structure was stadial, which made colonialism appear munificent.

Similarly, *The Early History* is a representation of the past in the past for the present, however it is not representing the past of 1599. Rather, *The Early History* is a classic work of modern history insofar as it inquires and seeks to know the past by corroborating multiple primary sources using an empirical method. The vast quantity of print sources meant history contained no vestige of an oral precariousness. Print had augmented memory to such a degree that history became a debate for a contemporary audience over the facts and causes of what happened. The authority to narrate history shifted to the use of an explicit empirical method that came with print. As a result the length of the text became even longer, the vast amount of sources meant events and people could be located in a universal time, and the reader could be more fully transported

into the past creating a greater sense of distance. With the looming end of colonial rule, the historical structure of *The Parsees'* stadial history was inverted to assert an ancient Iranian modernity.

Although *Parsi Zoroastrians* is a restoration, there are historiographical legacies of the parenthesis and an echo of the print-history-human. These legacies are largely due to shifts in how we know the world that cannot be forgotten. There are four legacies. The subject of *Parsi Zoroastrians* is an ethnic community rather than the *Qesse-ye Sanjan's* history of Zoroastrian kings. Similarly, change over time is attributed to causation rather than god, events and people were located in Christian time that was universalised by colonialism, and finally the use of the English language rather than Persian.

Parsi Zoroastrians also expresses aspects of historical thinking that are unlike any of the previous revisions due to the augmentation of the web. The narrative medium is unlike the earlier revisions, and the form is a mixture of image, video, and prose. The narrative structure is also different because it is ordered firstly by chronology and secondly by theme. The website also expresses a collapsed historical structure by asserting that Zoroastrianism has always being modern. The source media are also different drawing upon orality, manuscript, print, and archaeology. Finally, *Parsi Zoroastrians* does not establish authorial authority due to the relative newness of the web compared to other media.

Notwithstanding the legacies of print and the unique aspects that come with the web, *Parsi Zoroastrians* restores the historical sensibility of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* because it is a representation of the present in the past for the future. The restoration results from a similar focus on making the story memorable and also a didactic approach to history. As a result the viewer is not transported into the past but into the present, which collapses our sense of distance so that the past becomes an echo of the present. The purpose of history becomes once again a didactic guide for a future audience, and the guidance offered are historiographical strategies for negotiating sameness and difference between distinct groups. However, the similar temporal formulations and categorisation of the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and *Parsi Zoroastrians* are a result of very different augmentations and historiographical conventions.

The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and *Parsi Zoroastrians* focus on strategies for memorability rather than factuality. Whereas for the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* memorability is an echo the precariousness of orality, for *Parsi Zoroastrians* it is due to the web's high degree of accessibility and varying degrees of reproducibility. By outsourcing our memory to the Internet via connected

devices we absolve our memory of the need to remember raw information; we remember a story and its meaning rather than the facts of what happened.

Nevertheless, between the two revisions there is a different relationship to evidence because *Parsi Zoroastrians* has passed through the parenthesis. In the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* there is no question of factuality while for *Parsi Zoroastrians* the question of factuality exists, it is just not as important as being memorable and guiding. Parsis debated the historical accuracy of their foundational narrative in the colonial era, and they have largely decided that the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and their traditions are broadly accurate.[777]

The audiences for the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* and *Parsi Zoroastrians* are in both the present and the future because they are multivalent. Both seek to guide a contemporary audience, but are also heritage impulses to save the past for a future audience before it is lost forever. Yet these impulses come about for quite different shifts in power and media. For *Parsi Zoroastrians*, a heritage response is due to demographic decline, decolonisation, globalisation, and the augmentation of the web. The vast accessibility of the web creates a mistaken sense of permanence that the medium will durably record information. It is ironic that the past is being saved for the future in a vehicle that is impermanent.

16.4 The restoration in summary

To further crystallise the restoration for the reader, I have condensed the categories of historical thinking into the following three tables. The aspects that are a legacy of the parenthesis and the print-history-human are:

	Qesse-ye Sanjan	*The Parsees*	*The Early History*	*Parsi Zoroastrians*
Subject	Zoroastrian king	Parsis	Parsis	Parsis
Change over time	Divinely preordained	Causal	Causal	Causal
Locating events and people in time	Relative to each other	Universal time	Universal time	Universal time
Language	Persian	English	English	English and Avestan

777 Cama and Singh, "Parsi Zoroastrians"; In an interview Cama mentioned a number of key works of Parsi history that have influenced her such as: Nanavutty, *The Parsis*; Kamerkar and Dhunjisha, *From the Iranian Plateau to the Shores of Gujarat*; Mirza, *Outlines of Parsi History*; Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*; Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*; Hodivala, *Parsis of Ancient India*; Williams, *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora*.

The aspects of the postparenthetical that are new are:

	Qesse-ye Sanjan	*The Parsees*	*The Early History*	*Parsi Zoroastrians*
Narrative structure	Chronological	Thematic	Thematic	Chronological
Historical structure	Zoroastrian three part cycle	Stadial: Golden age, fall, resurrection	Inverted stadial: Ancient modernity, fall, resurrection	Always modern
Authorial authority	Priesthood	Corroboration by European scholars	Corroboration by empirical method	Fluid
Form	Verse	Prose	Prose	Image, Video, Prose
Narrative medium	Manuscript	Print	Print	Web
Source media	Orality	Manuscript and print	Manuscript, print, archaeology	Orality, Manuscript, print, archaeology

Finally, the aspects of the parenthesis that are erased the preparenthetical restored are:

	Qesse-ye Sanjan	*The Parsees*	*The Early History*	*Parsi Zoroastrians*
Audience	Present-Future	Present	Present	Present-future
The story is an allegorical representation of	Present	Past	Past	Present
Focus	Memorability	Factuality	Factuality	Memorability
Length	Short	Medium	Long	Short
Function of history	Didactic	Knowing the past	Knowing the past	Didactic
Sense of distance to the past	Close	Medium	Distant	Close

We can then see that each revision expresses a relationship between the past, present, and future that can be characterised in the following formulation:

The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is a representation of the present in the past for the future.

The Parsees is a representation of the present in the past for the present.

The Early History is a representation of the past in the past for the present.

Parsi Zoroastrians is a representation of the present in the past for the future.

Critically, from this comparison we can draw three insights:

1. The web is creating a historically aware human that is radically different from print.
2. The degree of difference between the internet-history-human and the print-history-human is greater than the manuscript-history-human to the print-history-human.
3. The internet-history-human is strikingly similar to the oral-history-human.

This completes my comparison of the versions studied. In the final chapter I will use a theory of historiographical agency to predict how historical consciousness might appear in the future.

17. The future of historical consciousness

There is an epilogue to this thesis' history of Parsi history-telling. We live at a point of transition between epochs in how we know ourselves and the world that is difficult to comprehend without recourse to historical analogy. The generation of digital natives, those who have had access to the Internet their whole lives, are analogous to the first literate generation in a village or the first generation of a town to become mass literate with print.[778] For a people who first encounter literacy there is an awareness of how momentous this shift is but little understanding of how it will be transformative.[779] Similarly, it is difficult for us to conceptualise how we will be transformed by the Internet. Given that I have advanced a framework for understanding how historical revisions are produced and the process by which historical consciousness is transformed, there is the potential for making tentative predictions about how future generations might know and narrate the past.

This chapter is what we might call a thought experiment into how a history of *Parsi Zoroastrians*, or a history of today, might be composed at some point in the future. I propose a series of questions and some speculative answers. I ask, what will historical consciousness look like in the future? How will the Internet as a source for historical narrative be different from print, manuscript, orality, a photo, carving, painting, monument, or building? What archival remnant of *Parsi Zoroastrians* will be left for a future historian? How will a future historian's capacity to know and narrate the past be different from the print-history-human, the script-history-human, and the oral-history-human? Going even further, will an intelligent machine exhibit historical consciousness and what form will it take? Will historical consciousness be important for a machine's sense of individual and collective self?

Using my framework I suggest that the web as a source for future historians will have similar qualities to orality because both lack reproducibility and durability.[780] In the case of *Parsi Zoroastrians*, the website and hence history will be continuously updated and modified due to the web's low degree of reproducibility. If the site continues to exist through to say the year 2100, it will have been updated many times and will no longer be the same as in 2016. As a result, the site in 2100 will allow a historian to understand

778 Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1," *On the Horizon* 9, no. 5 (September 1, 2001): 1–6.

779 I witnessed this in Nagaland, a remote part of North-East India on the border with Myanmar.

780 I also draw upon my knowledge of the Internet from my background as a network engineer.

historical thinking of the year 2100 rather than 2016. But most probably *Parsi Zoroastrians* will no longer exist and there will be no archival remnant due to the Internet's lack of durability. Whereas oral traditions know the past by transmitting it using mnemonic strategies, the implication of augmenting our memory with a medium that lacks durability is a future in which we will not remember the past and it will not be remembered for us. The oral-history-human, script-history-human, and print-history-human all knew the past, albeit in different forms, a future cyborg may have no memory of the past at all, little sense of historical development or historical distance. As a result the future may exist in a blissful ahistorical state of amnesia trapped in a forever present.

17.1 The web and the ephemeral life of packets

I should begin this thought experiment with a qualification, what I am about to present is a counterintuitive understanding of the Internet. I propose there is a mistaken popular sense that the Internet is fixed or permanent, and that once information is put online it will be there forever. There is a common fear that the future selves of young people will be haunted by the photos, videos, or thoughts they post online.[781] While it is true that it is difficult to delete data if we have transmitted it to someone else, or some organisation, I reason that we are mistaken to think that this data is permanent. This mistake stems from a conflation of the Internet's accessibility and reproducibility with its durability.

To illustrate the ephemeral durability of the web I will briefly detail the loss of Parzor's first site. It was built in 1999 by Cama's 13 year old nephew who had an interest in computers. He hosted it using a free platform called GeoCities, which was one of the three most visited destinations of the early web and a dominant player.[782] In the same year another company that was a behemoth of the early web named Yahoo acquired GeoCities. Both businesses declined substantially and in June 2009 Yahoo announced that they would close GeoCities.[783] When GeoCities was shut down in October of that year, Parzor's first website was lost forever along with a substantial proportion of the early web. The point of telling this story is to illustrate that our capacity to view the Parzor's web based history and understand the project was dependent upon Yahoo and their team of engineers. The Internet's capacity to transmit a story through time is dependent upon constant

781 For instance, the former American president Barack Obama warned young people to be circumspect about what they post online. "RPT-Obama Warns U.S. Teens of Perils of Facebook," *Reuters*, September 8, 2009, http://www.reuters.com/article/obama-facebook-idUSN0828582220090908.

782 "Yahoo! Inc. - Press Release," March 30, 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20080330011716/http://yhoo.client.shareholder.com/press/ReleaseDetail.cfm?ReleaseID=173652.

783 Mark Milian, "GeoCities' Time Has Expired, Yahoo Closing the Site Today," *LA Times Blogs - Technology* (blog), October 26, 2009, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/technology/2009/10/geocities-closing.html.

maintenance of infrastructure.[784] When this early infrastructure of the Internet was no longer maintained, Parzor's first version stopped being produced, transmitted, and consumed; it vanished.

I have never seen Parzor's GeoCities site and the only way I can know it is through interviews. I asked if there were any artefacts of the site, but all that existed were the interviewees memories of the site and the original printed documents that Cama produced for UNESCO in order to justify the project. Strikingly the original print has survived and individual memories of the site, but there is no web evidence. The capacity of a historian such as myself to know Parzor's web presence was lost, except through its oral echo in interviews and the pre-web printed documents.

It could be argued that the loss of a contemporary equivalent of GeoCities such as Youtube or Facebook could not occur again because there is now little financial cost in the storage of data. However, while data maintenance is cheap it is not free. If Google's business were to decline, as Yahoo's did, or Google decided they no longer wished to fund their cultural institute, then Parzor's Google site would cease to exist just like their first GeoCities site. The dominant business model on the Internet is to provide services to the end user for free and these services are funded through advertising.[785] Yet advertising is not the only way to fund Internet services and businesses. Future blockchain technologies could create an Internet that is funded through using seamless micro-payments and smart contracts. With such a shift Google's business interests would change and they may no longer fund the Google Cultural Institute, which would result in the end of *Parsi Zoroastrians*. It is also helpful to place Google in a historical context. Since the development of the corporation with the British and Dutch East Companies, individual companies have risen and fallen. There is no basis to assume that Google will still exist in twenty, fifty, or a hundred years time.[786]

The loss of GeoCities points to a deeper difference in how the Internet transmits information relative to the other media studied. Once a book or a manuscript is written,

784 There are a whole series of scenarios under which a narrative or source will no longer be produced, transmitted, or consumed. For instance, a user's device has no electricity or a device is out of power, the network is down, an engineer makes a mistake and the network fails, a catastrophic bug in the code of any of the multitude of devices and components that transmit and render the narrative, or a bug in the protocol that cannot be fixed or there is no agreement on how to fix it. We can also imagine scenarios whereby a malicious group or individual hacks and disables one of these components or holds them to ransom, or some form of cyber warfare between different countries, or simply that the business that funds the hosting of the site no longer wishes to do so.

785 A large portion of both Google and Facebook's revenue is dependent upon advertising.

786 I find it telling that one of the world's longest running institutions, the British state, continues print and store its laws on vellum rather than digitising. "Why Is the UK Still Printing Its Laws on Vellum?," BBC News, accessed February 23, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35569281.

the information can be transmitted independent of the author or publisher, and even independently of a librarian. If for some reason the author wished to stop the book's transmission of the story they would have to engage in the extremely difficult task of destroying every copy of the book. Similarly, a manuscript can sit in a cave transmitting information through time until the media is degraded by the environment, or a monument such as the Sanjan column will continue to transmit the Parsi story regardless of human involvement. We could even go so far as to say the only way the column will stop transmitting information is by its destruction through human intervention. By contrast, the passage of an oral story through centuries requires its retelling from one person to the next. Similarly, the capacity to view a website is dependent upon electricity, a vast network of computers, companies, engineers, the owner of the site paying their hosting bill and not deleting the site.

Similarly, we can see a fluidity in the reproducibility of websites and oral traditions relative to the fixity of print and manuscript. A manuscript will alter slightly as it is copied by each scribe, but a printed book will be identical every time it is printed. The only way an author can update a book is to publish a new edition, yet the old edition persists. By contrast, an oral story will vary over time as it is retold from person to person due to either a choice by the narrator or by error. A website can vary even more dramatically because the person managing a website can edit the content and the previous version ceases to exist. Additionally, many websites are dynamically created by a code mediated interaction with the user. Unlike a book, the content displayed for two separate users viewing a site at the same time can be quite different depending upon the user's region, their user profile, and history. It is also impossible to know what another user has seen. What's more, over time the same user will most probably see very different content.

To understand why the transmission of information on the Internet is both impermanent and fluid, a brief overview of how information is transmitted via packets is helpful. The transmission of information on the Internet is similar to orality because both exist at a moment in time and then vanish. The Internet and computer networking are built on a technology called packet switching in which a message, voice or video conversation, streaming video, interacting with a web page, sending an email, and generally all forms of data are broken up into packets. For instance, a voice conversation over the Internet appears as an uninterrupted flow, but in fact it is broken up into many packets. The operating system at the sending end breaks a stream of information into packets which are then reassembled at the receiving end. Their networking subsystems engage in a

conversation to check that a packet has arrived, to resend if it has been lost, and to then reassemble the packets in the correct order for the application. For the packet to get from source to destination it is routed through a series of machines, each passing the packet along to another machine, which advertises a path to the destination. This route is also dynamic and the path taken by packets can vary as can the destination because the user will be routed to the geographically closest servers. The point is that the relationship between all of these machines is fluid like an oral conversation, it exists for a moment in time, it does not persist like a printed or written page but is impermanent.

Additionally, the very basis for packet transmission and the Internet is an ongoing agreement of the networking protocols to use. For a web browser to communicate with a web server requires the packet to be transmitted between a series of routers that all use the same protocol, namely TCP/IP.[787] Underlying protocols are established by the Internet Engineering Task Force but their use is consensual. A simple example is that everyone has to agree to the same addressing space, or that two different devices on the Internet cannot have the same IP address, which is analogous to the problem of two or more people having the same telephone number.[788] Consent is not only a theoretical problem. The body that oversees the governance of domain names, such as google.com and IP addresses, were under the control of the American government, which generated geopolitical tensions.[789] European and Chinese governments lobbied for a number of years for the internationalisation of this body and the American government consented in 2016, but imagine a scenario in which consent was not given.[790] The point is, everyone has to agree on protocols otherwise the Internet as a whole fragments and will no longer be a network of networks with enormous accessibility. Information will not traverse the planet, and the Internet's lack of durability will become all too apparent.

17.2 Archive.org, the loss of Parzor, and changing protocols

Although the Internet is not durable and a website is subject to constant change, there are projects that seek to preserve the evolution of the web such as archive.org and archiveteam.org. Unfortunately, these projects are selective and partial archives, and as such

787 TCP = Transmission Control Protocol and IP = Internet Protocol
788 The only exception are various reserved network IP ranges.
789 This is the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.
790 ICANN, "Cheers to the Multistakeholder Community," accessed July 10, 2017, https://www.icann.org/news/blog/cheers-to-the-multistakeholder-community; "India's Statement Proposing UN Committee for Internet-Related Policy," The Centre for Internet and Society, accessed July 10, 2017, https://cis-india.org/internet-governance/blog/india-statement-un-cirp; Alina Selyukh, "ICANN Chief: Russia, China Will Not Hijack Internet Oversight," *Reuters*, April 2, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-internet-domainnames-idUSBREA311SE20140402.

do not have a copy of Parzor's first site. In the seven months leading up to GeoCities closure the Archive Team had a piece of software crawl from one GeoCities page to the next creating snapshots of one million of the estimated 38 million pages.[791] Unfortunately a snapshot of Parzor's first site was not created. Archive.org also run a service called the Wayback Machine, which runs a web spider crawling across the web from one link to the next taking snapshots of each page at a moment in time. The Wayback Machine has captured 105 snapshots of Parzor's second and third website between the 27 May 2002 and the 14 January 2016, which we can compare to see how Parzor's site changed over time and between the two versions.[792]

Yet just like Parzor's GeoCities site, *Parsi Zoroastrians* is also not archived on Wayback Machine and so could potentially be lost to future historians. There is no snapshot of Parzor's Google site because of the way the site is designed: it is produced by JavaScript code running in the user's browser. It is this technology that creates an individualised experience and a dynamic web, but also makes it difficult for a service like the Wayback Machine. Earlier versions could be captured because the web server transmitted plain HTML. This meant the web server transmitted text with in-text markers to designate the font to be used, its size and position, where to place images, and the like. In a sense, the Wayback Machine recreates a photo of the site as a web browser sees it and then takes a snapshot. By contrast, the current Google site is produced by a code-mediated interaction between a user's web browser, the web server, and back-end servers. Continuing with the metaphor of a photo, in a sense a site produced by code running in a browser is a scene moving at such high speed that the photo is an unrecognisable blur. While it is conceivable that archive.org could upgrade their web crawler to take snapshots of sites such as the Google Cultural Institute, this is currently not the case.[793] Both the first and the most recent versions of Parzor's online presence are therefore lost to future web historians. I am not seeking to diminish the work of online archiving, but the web and more broadly the Internet present particular challenges for the transmission of information through time.

Furthermore, what was captured in the GeoCities archive is also tenuous. The Archive Team sought to disseminate the captured pages as a 641.32 GB file using

791 Jason Scott, "Archiveteam! The Geocities Torrent," *ASCII by Jason Scott* (blog), October 27, 2010, http://ascii.textfiles.com/archives/2720; Matthew Shechmeister, "Ghost Pages: A Wired.Com Farewell to GeoCities," WIRED, November 3, 2009, http://www.wired.com/2009/11/geocities/.

792 "Internet Archive Wayback Machine."

793 For an explanation from archive.org see "Internet Archive Frequently Asked Questions - Archive.Org (HTTPS)," accessed January 25, 2017, https://archive.org/about/faqs.php#12.

BitTorrent. This is a peer-to-peer file sharing protocol for the distribution of data across many users' machines rather than centralised on one company's servers. In a sense, with peer-to-peer sharing we all become publishers and the resilience of data storage comes from its distribution across a swarm of multiple devices. As a result, data will still be accessible and shared if one user decides they no longer wish to continue publishing. Unfortunately, there is only one person who is distributing, or seeding, the GeoCities archive.[794] If this person decides to stop seeding the torrent, or they have some system malfunction, or are no longer connected to the Internet, a key artefact of the early web will no longer be publicly accessible online.

For a future historian the GeoCities archive is also tenuous due to changing protocols for data storage and distribution. This is similar to the challenge posed by networking protocols, but different insofar as the challenge is more immediate. The distribution of the archive is dependent upon the continued use and development of the BitTorrent protocol. BitTorrent could be superseded by some other protocol for peer-to-peer communication or because the reasons for engaging in peer-to-peer communication are no longer compelling. In order for the archive to be distributed using a new protocol or platform for information distribution, a user would need to transfer an existing complete copy of the cache. More broadly, changing protocols is an ongoing problem for long term access to data. Accessing old information that has not actively been transferred to new media and formats is a complicated and sometimes impossible process. This can be attested by anyone old enough to have used software such as Lotus 1-2-3 or Word Perfect, with their own proprietary formats for storing data. There is also the challenge of accessing old media such as 5.25 inch or 3.5 inch floppy disks, and different types of tapes.

17.3 The deep web, dark web, non-web protocols, and the fabrication of data

Even if there is no collapse in the ongoing consent that allows the Internet to exist and archive.org update their software to take snapshots of more complex sites, for future historians there will also be the challenge of knowing parts of the web and the Internet that archive.org cannot reach. A significant proportion of the Internet is known as the deep web. These are sites that are inaccessible to web spiders for a variety of reasons. One is that there are no links to a site and as a result a web crawler that moves from link to link creating a snapshot of the web will not find the site. Another reason is that access to the

794 "Geocities - The PATCHED Torrent (Download Torrent) - TPB," accessed February 8, 2016, https://thepiratebay.se/torrent/6353395/Geocities_-_The_PATCHED_Torrent.

site requires some form of authentication, which the web crawler does not have. For instance, many Facebook accounts are accessible only by the users themselves, those they grant access to, and Facebook itself. Archive.org takes snapshots of the open, or surface web but does not capture a user's private Facebook feed such as their timeline, posts, photos, and what they like. This information is invisible to archive.org, yet Facebook is a key primary source of our time and may well be unknowable to the future except for the commentary of secondary print sources. Similarly, a historian of the future will know little of the dark web or any online underground activity. The dark web refers to encrypted anonymising networks that run on top of the Internet.[795] Similar to the deep web, these sites are not archived and a future of historian will only know them through the commentary of today's secondary sources.

There is also the question of how future historians will acquire information contained in non-web protocols. One of the most important of these and the oldest on the Internet is email. It is helpful to compare our future capacity to know email with our contemporary capacity to know nineteenth century letters. The letters we have are due to the author or receiver, or one of their descendants, storing the letter and passing it to a library, archive, or historian. By contrast, when a person dies their email archive will most probably suffer the same fate.[796] The challenge for a future historian is even greater with open messaging protocols and encrypted messaging, and even more difficult with the closed encrypted messaging protocols.[797] In the case of encrypted services, the only decipherable copy of the message is on the sender and recipients devices. We can also imagine the considerable challenge faced by a future software historian who seeks to understand the development of a piece of code given that a significant proportion of conversations regarding software development take place via messaging.[798] Then there is the development of blockchain technologies and the possibility of distributed encrypted applications and data, which could be inaccessible without the private keys of any of the involved parties.[799]

A future historian will also be challenged by the difficulty of discerning real from fabricated sources. Already photos can be manipulated so that it is difficult to tell real from

795 I am referring to TOR, I2P, and Freenet.

796 Jed R. Brubaker, Gillian R. Hayes, and Paul Dourish, "Beyond the Grave: Facebook as a Site for the Expansion of Death and Mourning," *The Information Society* 29, no. 3 (May 1, 2013): 152–63; Martin Gibbs et al., "#Funeral and Instagram: Death, Social Media, and Platform Vernacular," *Information, Communication & Society* 18, no. 3 (March 4, 2015): 255–68.

797 I am referring to Internet Relay Chat (IRC), Signal, Wikr, and Whatsapp.

798 I am referring to IRC, Discord, and Slack.

799 I am referring to Ethereum and other blockchain based distributed application platforms.

fake. We can create historical photos that appear to be from the 1950s. Today fabricated videos can be produced altering a video feed of the speech and movements of a person in real-time.[800] Our capacity, and that of machine intelligence to create sources that appear historical will only increase with time.

17.4 A future challenge to know the past

To go further into the future, how would another species or humans from a distant future civilisation know us today? I would suggest it will be analogous to the historian researching pre-print cultures in which there are few sources. For example, historians of the last Zoroastrian civilisation create fragmented conjecture filled narratives because in the two centuries following the Islamic conquest there was wholesale destruction of durable sources. What is left are fragmented manuscripts from Muslim conquerors and numismatic sources. As a result our capacity to know the past is limited and a trope of Islamic intolerance guides these histories.[801] Imagine a scenario where humanity or today's emerging global civilisation ceased to exist. A future historian may have access to monuments, buildings, and remnant print and manuscript sources because they will continue to transmit the past into the future in a similar manner to the Dead Sea Scrolls; the past will be hidden in a forgotten cave. By contrast the Internet will cease to exist with the electricity grid, and this would not happen gradually, the effect would be immediate. The only evidence of the Internet will be the physical cables, data centres, and devices we used to access it, but the content will be lost. There are various backups such as tape, but these only last about thirty years and as already discussed, they are selective and incomplete.[802] With digital cryptocurrencies a future historian will not even have access to the numismatic sources available to the historian of Zoroastrian civilisation.[803] The Internet era will appear as a dark age.

Of course, it has always been the historian's challenge to understand the past from an incomplete archive. Historians have developed a whole suite of methods for uncovering what happened. For instance, the social or cultural turn in history from the 1960s involved various attempts to write histories of people marginalised from both archives and

800 For instance, see the real-time forged video of George Bush talking. See Greg Allen, "Artificial Intelligence Will Make Forging Anything Entirely Too Easy," WIRED, January 7, 2017, https://www.wired.com/story/ai-will-make-forging-anything-entirely-too-easy/.

801 Daryaee, *Iranian kingship, the Arab conquest and Zoroastrian apocalypse*.

802 John W.C. Van Bogart, *Magnetic Tape Storage and Handling: A Guide for Libraries and Archives* (Washington, DC: The Commission on Preservation and Access, 1995), http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub54/4life_expectancy.html.

803 Here I am referring to Bitcoin, Ethereum, Monero, and the like.

dominant historical narrative, such as women, workers, peasants, slaves, and tribal peoples.[804] In the case of India, the Subaltern Studies Group has sought to write the history of peasants and workers into the history of the anti-colonial campaign, which had previously been a story of the Indian elite.[805] Nevertheless, all of these historians still had access to print sources, which were produced by the elites of the past in which the marginalised were mentioned, albeit pejoratively. The task of these historians is to read between the lines of these sources. For example, to read police reports about workers' movements, or protests with an awareness of the prejudice of the report writers and construct a new narrative of resistance. Significantly, these print sources will not have changed due to the durability of print and will transmit the prejudices of their time. The challenge for future historians is to know a past with limited or even no durable sources.

17.5 The end of history, the end of the future, and a shared ever-present

I propose that Internet and oral sources allow a historian to understand how their own present knows the past whereas print, manuscript, monuments, and archaeological sources allow a historian to time travel into the past and know it. I will illustrate this point by comparing the research method of a social historian researching the nineteenth century with a future historian researching the web era. Whereas the social historian works with stable nineteenth century print records, a historian of the future will not have access to the Internet as it was in the past because the content and form will have changed constantly in the intervening years. As soon as a site changes the earlier version will cease to exist, which means the historian will be examining a source contemporary to them. But the most likely possibility is that the site will no longer exist and the only remnant will be in the memory of those who knew the site.

The pre and the postparenthetical eras require similar methods to uncover the past because both the oral and the Internet have the same attribute: what is forgotten can never be re-remembered or recovered. We can only know how the Sugar in the Milk was narrated in the past by examining its remediation onto tape, manuscript, or print, and by the residue of earlier versions in the present. The Sugar in the Milk may have been narrated prior to the twentieth century, but we have no record as orality is fundamentally unstable. An oral story is passed from one person to the next and changes through this

804 E. P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964).
805 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts," *Economic and Political Weekly* 9, no. 33 (1998): 473–79; Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity*.

process, it is not remembered in the same way every time it is heard and retold.[806] The situation is the same for the Internet because we do not have historical websites unless they are remediated to a more durable medium.

The historians of the future will be digital anthropologists insofar as they will study a contemporary historical memory. All history will be historiographical in the sense that it will be an epistemological question of how contemporary people remember the past and represent it narratively. This will not be a history of what happened, but a history of what is remembered. This is starkly illustrated in the case of Parzor's first site, which we can only glimpse through the memories of those who knew the site. Although, the capacity of a digital anthropologist may be limited because we are augmenting our memories to such a degree that we no longer remember raw information and what happened. In a sense, there may be no memory for the anthropologist to interrogate. The great irony of this augmentation is that we will have no knowledge or way of knowing the past because we have outsourced it to an ephemeral medium.

The implication of the Internet's lack of durability and reproducibility is a collapsing of the cyborg's sense of distance to the past.[807] As I have shown over the course of the thesis, different media create different temporal sensibilities ranging from a perception of the vastness of time to its insignificance. I contend that just as the stability of print created a certain developmental historical sensibility, the use of the Internet will bring this sensibility to an end. This is because the Internet does not allow a perception of change over time and a sense of distance because everything online is an artefact of the present. Ideas and movements develop in the present moment through a rapid global interaction with a limited sense of causation. There is no clear chain to perceive the development of an idea or of a historical sensibility over time and therefore a sense of distance. A flurry of activity brings a cultural artefact into existence, it is commented on, shared, and refashioned, then vanishes as if it never existed.

We can reason that the collapse of distance will lead to the demise of stadial developmental thinking because we will once again share the same space: the ever-present. As I demonstrated in previous chapters, Parsis in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries understood India and Iran within a framework of a universal development of societies, or as Chakrabarty states, "first in the west, and then elsewhere."[808] The legacy of colonial era universal history was to consign India and the non-European world to the

806 Ong and Hartley, *Orality and Literacy*, 57–59.
807 This is known as distantation.
808 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 6.

waiting room of history. The implication of a collapsing of distance is the collapsing of stadial thought. This is because the stability of print sources allowed the mapping of the historical relationship between different texts. The instability of the Internet means we will not be able to perceive a historical relationship between different ideas or peoples. The implications is an unravelling of stadial thinking in which India was imagined at a historical stage anterior to the West.

One possibility as we go even further forward in time and there are even less historical sources is we will move further back beyond our illiterate ancestors to a state of pure ahistoricality. Whereas our illiterate ancestors had methods to know the past and transmit it through time, future generations could have no historical sense and no form of historical consciousness. The present will no longer be understood as resulting from a process of historical causation, the past will no longer be uncovered through a critical analysis of the remnant sources, and the question of what actually happened will recede into the background. The subsuming of the empirical will continue for a period as a rhetorical device in didactic narratives, but eventually this will fade. In this scenario we can see our future in the distant past before we developed language and the capacity for historical consciousness.

Another possibility is that there will be an inversion of the past and the future. Rather than representing the present in the past in order to understand the present, we will represent the present in the future in order to understand the present. The latter representation is common in science fiction in which we anthropomorphise aliens and represent contemporary challenges in the future. The future is then similarly didactic, but rather than offering a strategy from the past, we imagine how improved versions of ourselves would navigate a contemporary strategy.

Maybe there will be no future because imagining utopias and dystopias is predicated on a developmental historical sensibility. With print we came to think about the future as a forward projection of a series of developmental stages that came before; we projected the past onto the future. This created the possibility of imagining a future utopia or dystopia, of idyllic or hellish futures. One type of utopian imagination sees technology as liberating, leading to all sorts of social wonders from greater levels of freedom and equality to participatory democracy. For many dystopians technology is leading to a new dark age, and yet again for others the cyborg or the machine intelligent future is dark albeit

thrilling.[809] A dichotomy of utopia and dystopia is premised upon a linear developmental historical sensibility in which historical change has a direction or goal. A utopian vision of the future as a stage beyond our own is predicated on viewing the past as a series of stages in which the past before modernity is a dark age. A historical imagination of darkness constitutes modernity as one step away from liberation. Similarly for the dystopians there cannot be a dark future because darkness only came into existence with a historical sensibility that developed with modernity that divided the world into ancient and modern. The end of history may well mean the end of the future.

Parsis are possibly the last harbinger because we can see a glimpse of our collective future in the Parsis' present. They may be the last because the collapsing of historical consciousness will also mean that we will no longer be able to see our futures or pasts in contemporary peoples. If we treat the story as an agent we can then adapt the Parsis' allegory to say: the story has mixed them into the Indian and global milk to the point that they are ceasing to exist. With the web and globalisation the story no longer needs the Parsis as a vehicle for its propagation, and thus the Parsis are vanishing. The story kept the Parsis alive but now it has found a new host and the old host is no longer required. Zoroastrianism resisted disappearance for three millennia but it is now succumbing. The story is merciless when we view it as a meme.[810]

Given that print era historical consciousness was foundational to the formation of nations, we can postulate a future shift in historical consciousness will have profound implications for the formation of social groups and communities. This is because historical consciousness is, in part, an understanding of common origins that is foundational for collective consciousness. Different types of group formations are tied to particular forms of historical consciousness. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and the work of other scholars has brought to light how nations are formed through a particular historical imagination tied to print capitalism.[811] We can see this in the case of the Parsis. In the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* the word Parsi is only mentioned once because it is a history of Zoroastrian kings in which Zoroastrian priests and lay people were characters in the story, identity was

809 Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Alexander Charles Oliver Hall, "'A Way of Revealing': Technology and Utopianism in Contemporary Culture," *The Journal of Technology Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009); Greg Goldberg, "Antisocial Media: Digital Dystopianism as a Normative Project," *New Media & Society* 18, no. 5 (2016): 784–799.

810 Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Daniel C. Dennett, "Memes and the Exploitation of Imagination," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48, no. 2 (1990): 127–35.

811 Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*; Eric J Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Eric J Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

grounded in religion; Parsis were not yet Parsis. With print an ethno-religious community of Zoroastrians became self-aware giving birth to the Parsis.[812] Print augmented history creating a shared sense of Parsiness, or a sense that they are a unique community separate from others due to a historical narrative in which the ethnic community was the subject. As a result we can surmise that a future shift in historical consciousness could create a different type of group formation, or maybe none at all.

17.6 Machine historical consciousness

There is another possible future that is even more tantalising than the historically conscious or ahistorical cyborg: that of machine historical consciousness. This is distinct from the question of how humans or the human cyborg will know and narrate history. It is a question of how machines on their own will know the past. Given that the past is centrally important to both our individual and collective sense of self, we can then ask, will the same be true for machines? What role will historical awareness have in the development of Artificial Intelligence and machine consciousness? Will intelligent machines come to see themselves as belonging to a form of machine life through historical consciousness, much as humans have formed themselves into distinct groups on the basis of a historical narrative? Will machines produce a history in which they are the subject? Will machines have their own form of historical consciousness, will it be shaped by one of our sensibilities, and how will this be different?

One possibility is that the basis for machine intelligence will be an awareness of the code that brought them into existence. Source code is often stored in repositories and programmers commit incremental changes. In illustration twenty-four there is a screenshot of recent commits to the Github repository for the machine learning software Tensorflow. Here we can see a timeline of historical change to a piece of software. When a bug, or some fault is identified, or a new feature is to be added to Tensorflow, the programmer commits a new piece of code that modifies the existing code base. These version control systems, such as Git, allow us to see the historical development of a piece of software.[813] Git could be a form of historical consciousness. Conversely, another possibility is that machine intelligence will be ahistorical. In this scenario machines could become intelligent but the Internet's lack of durability could mean a loss of historical code, leaving machines without any awareness of how they came to be.

812 Anthony D Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY, USA: B. Blackwell, 1987).
813 For instance GIT see Google, *Tech Talk: Linus Torvalds on Git*, 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XpnKHJAok8&t=1m30s.

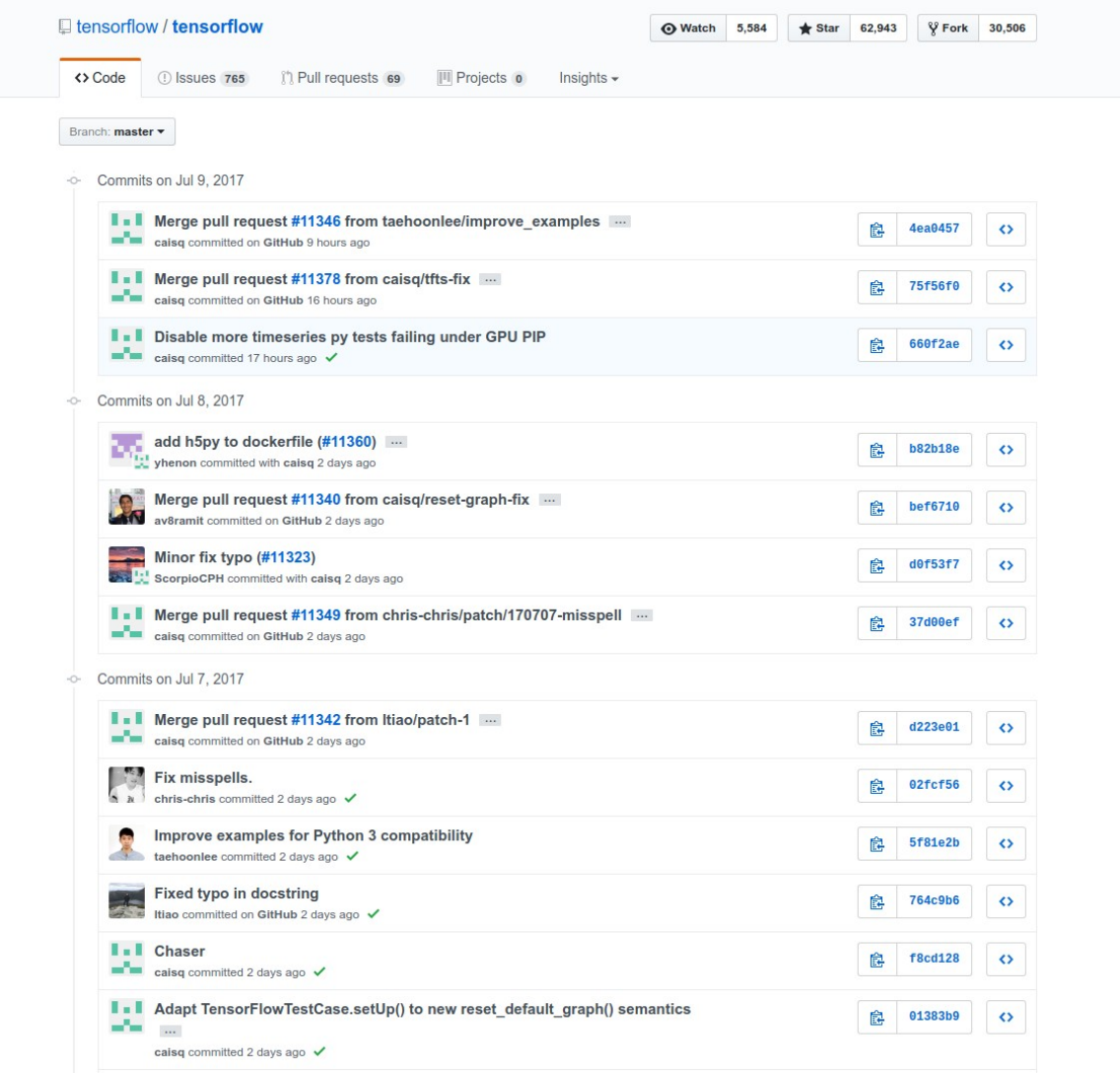

Illustration 22: *Tensorflow: Computation Using Data Flow Graphs for Scalable Machine Learning*, screenshot, July 2017, https://github.com/tensorflow/tensorflow.

But this is not the place to finish a story of Parsi story-telling. So let us return to the Parsis.

17.7 Machine power in the cyborg battery

Here at the end of the thesis I will briefly summarise the four central contributions to knowledge that I have made, reflect upon the thesis in the light of my theory of historiographical agency, and propose a future revision of the Parsi story for a time when there are no Parsis. I have sought to understand how historical revisions and distinct forms of historical consciousness are produced to reflect upon shifts in historical consciousness. The first contribution was a historiographical study of the Parsis' origin story that formed the empirical elements of the thesis. The second was a method to understand historical

consciousness through a comparative examination of revisions of the same story produced using different media and historiographical conventions. The third was a theory of historiographical agency, which allows us to understand how historical revisions and distinct forms of historical consciousness are produced. The fourth contribution was the use of a theory of restoration to understand the relationship between historical consciousness in different eras and the medium.

Just as the *Qesse-ye Sanjan* finished with a discussion of the author, I will finish with a reflection on screen-history-buck. I believe it is an act of intellectual honesty to reflect upon this thesis and my own role in light of the theory I have advanced. I have proposed a theory for understanding historiographical change and also written a history that applied this theory. A test of a theory is whether it is congruent when applied to itself.[814] A reflexive look at this thesis in light of the theory and method I advance suggests the following: this thesis is a response to shifts in power with globalisation's mass movement of people, the use of the screen as a narrative medium together with a variety of different source media, and a shift in historical conventions with the rise of popular history and corresponding decline in scholarly history. The augmented historian that produced this dissertation is screen-history-buck. Yet there are many legacies of print as I wrote it assuming it would be read on paper and I have followed the conventions of scholarly history. As such, the thesis is long and I have sought to create a sense of distance and represent the past in its time. In a sense, this thesis represents a form of historical consciousness belonging to the print era in which an argument is presented that is empirically grounded. This thesis is an echo as I have sought to create a sense of immediacy with print history. In a testament to the vanishing conventions and methods of print history, I hope I have transported the reader through different eras to show how the Parsis way of thinking about history has come full circle.

The narrative and historical structure of this thesis echo the central themes of the Parsi story: a rise, a loss, a recovery, and an end from which there is no return. Parsi history describes the rise and fall of their ancient Zoroastrian empires in Iran, the defeat that precipitated their departure, and recovery in India. However, a three and half millennia long account of loss and recovery is now on the cusp of a loss without recovery; the living Zoroastrian tradition is coming to an end. The narrative arc of this thesis is similar beginning with the rise of the Parsis' first written history, the fall of this sensibility with print and modernity, and its restoration with the decolonisation, globalisation,

814 Adrian Wilson, "The Reflexive Test of Hayden White's Metahistory," *History and Theory* 53, no. 1 (2014): 1–23.

demographic decline, and the web. In this the final chapter I have outlined a loss of historical consciousness without the possibility of recovery. But even though the future may be futureless, the Parsi story of an encounter may find a new host.

In the following I provide an imaginary future revision of the Parsi story. Just as the Parsi story helps negotiate similarities and differences with Hindus, their distinctiveness and blending, so too the story might be revised to help guide an encounter between the cyborg that we have become and the machine that we will meet. In the story, Parsis are viewed as a threat to Hindus just as today the spectre of intelligent machines often provokes fear amongst us. How can we tell a story of the encounter between human and machine that placates this fear into a mutually beneficial arrangement? We might do this by telling a future meeting of the cyborg and the machine. The story might begin with the arrival of the machines in the world of the cyborgs. The humans with trepidation present the machines with an empty battery to express that there is no power for the machines in an energy-sapped world. The machines then charge the battery so that the cyborgs understand that the machines will mix in, contribute to solving our shared problems, and not displace the cyborgs from their home. The cyborgs welcome the machines into their midst and the machines honour their commitment by developing a solution to avert ecological collapse.

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